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WILLIAM MAHONE
of Virginia
Soldier and Political Insurgent

By

NELSON MOREHOUSE BLAKE, PH.D.

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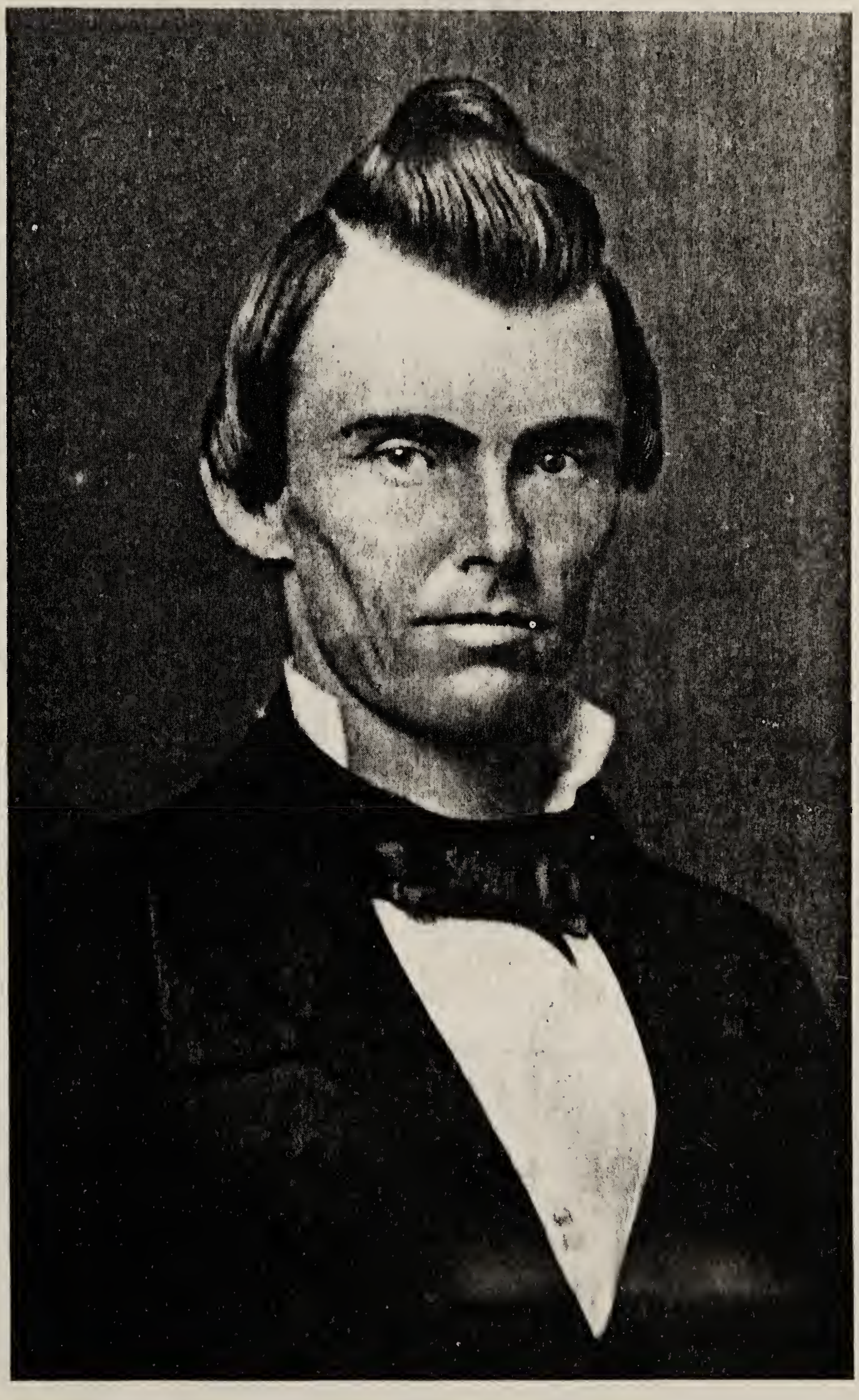

Mahone, the Builder

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TO

WILLIAM K. BOYD

PREFACE

MORE than six years ago, at the suggestion of Professor William K. Boyd of Duke University, I began a study of the development of railroad transportation in Virginia. Within a short time I discovered that the leading figure in connection with the early history of the Norfolk and Western was General William Mahone. With the hope of securing first-hand information regarding his railroad activities I visited the home of his daughter, Mrs. William L. (Otelia Mahone) McGill, at Petersburg. In a commodious basement room, formerly used as an office, I discovered the large and excellently preserved collection of Mahone Papers containing an almost unlimited amount of material relating to his railway, military, and political exploits. In this vast collection are more than one hundred thousand manuscripts, most of which are letters and documents relating to Mahone's political career. There are about ninety letter press copy books containing approximately twenty thousand letters. There are more than forty scrap books comprising a wide selection of newspaper clippings from both the friendly and hostile press. There are between forty and fifty pamphlets dealing particularly with Mahone's railway and political activities. And finally, there are fifteen or twenty notebooks which throw additional light on the subject. Having been granted unrestricted access to this wealth of material it seemed the part of wisdom to abandon my original project and to devote my entire attention to a biography of General Mahone.

William Mahone has been described as "the most influential political figure which Virginia has produced since the days of Thomas Jefferson." Whether or not this be true, it is safe to affirm that he is the most dynamic and picturesque figure in Virginia history since the period of the War between the States. As a railroad builder, a military commander, and a political leader his active and varied career is without parallel in the annals of the State. Praiseworthy indeed as were many of his efforts, nevertheless, his fight to consolidate the railroads of Southside Virginia and especially his fearless stand as a political insurgent called down upon him the bitter criticism of the opposing financial interests and of the conservative political elements. Even during his lifetime his friends referred to him as one of the "best abused" men living, and a recent

writer has declared him to be "the most outrageously maligned character in Virginia history." It is high time, therefore, that a comprehensive and unprejudiced account of his life should be written and such is the purpose of this biography.

Acknowledgments are due a large number of individuals who have generously aided me in carrying out this study. Chief among these are Mr. and Mrs. William L. McGill of Petersburg, who, in addition to granting me the exclusive use of the Mahone Papers have assisted me in securing valuable information from various other sources. Hardly less significant has been the assistance of Mr. Lucius L. Manry of Courtland, a nephew of General Mahone, who has kindly aided me in securing courthouse records and other material relating to the ancestry and youth of Mahone. I am grateful to Mr. F. B. Riddleberger of Woodstock for the use of the unpublished papers of his father, Senator H. H. Riddleberger; and to Mrs. M. H. Massey of Charlottesville, for the manuscript of "Parson" Massey, much of which is included in Elizabeth H. Hancock's *Autobiography of John E. Massey.*

Others have greatly aided me in gaining access to valuable material. For Mahone's scholastic record and early professional activities I am indebted to Colonel William Couper of the Virginia Military Institute who placed the official records and manuscripts of that institution at my disposal. I am happy to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. H. R. McIlwaine of the Virginia State Library, who has not only guided me in the use of the abundant material which is found there but has furnished many other helpful suggestions. Likewise, I am grateful to Hon. Wilburn Cartwright, member of Congress from Oklahoma, and to Hon. Patrick Henry Drewry, member of Congress from Virginia, for their assistance in securing access to important records at the Library of Congress and elsewhere.

Numerous others have stimulated me by their helpful observations. For a want of space only a few may be mentioned here, but others are noted throughout the study. Special reference should be made, however, to Judge Edmund Waddill, Junior, Hon. H. T. Wickham, Dr. Douglas S. Freeman, Dr. William S. Drewry, and Mr. W. McK. Evans of Richmond; to Dr. Arthur Kyle Davis, Mr. Walter Edward Harris, Mr. Carter R. Bishop, Mr. Dandridge Spottswood, Dr. C. S. Dodd, Mr. Robert Cabaniss, Mr. James M. Quicke, Junior, Mr. Robert Gilliam, and Dr. J. M. Gandy of Petersburg; to Senator Carter Glass of Lynchburg; to Mr. Greenlee D. Letcher of Lexington; to Lieutenant Colonel Arthur E. Wilbourn of Fredericksburg; to Hon. Henry A. Wise of Kiptopeke; to Mr. J. T. Gittman of Columbia, South Carolina; to Colonel Jennings

C. Wise and Mr. John S. Barbour of Washington; and to Dr. John Bassett Moore of New York City.

Several studies have proved of value in tracing the career of Mahone. Most significant among these are the following: H. J. Eckenrode, *The Political History of Virginia during the Reconstruction;* C. C. Pearson, *The Readjuster Movement in Virginia;* Richard L. Morton, *Virginia Since 1861,* Vol. III of the *History of Virginia;* W. H. T. Squires, "Major General William Mahone," in *The Land of Decision;* the articles in the *Norfolk and Western Magazine* on the growth and development of the Norfolk and Western Railroad, by Frank Helvestine; and the booklet on Mahone, "The Hero of Jerusalem," by George F. Bragg, Junior.

Particular acknowledgments are due Professor William K. Boyd for numerous helpful suggestions and stimulating criticisms. Thanks are due the members of the Duke University Library Staff for their co-operation in the location and use of pertinent material. I am extremely grateful to Miss Theresa D. Hodges of the Petersburg Public Library and to all others who have kindly aided me in preparing the manuscript for publication and in the arduous task of proof reading.

NELSON M. BLAKE.

The National Archives
November, 1935.

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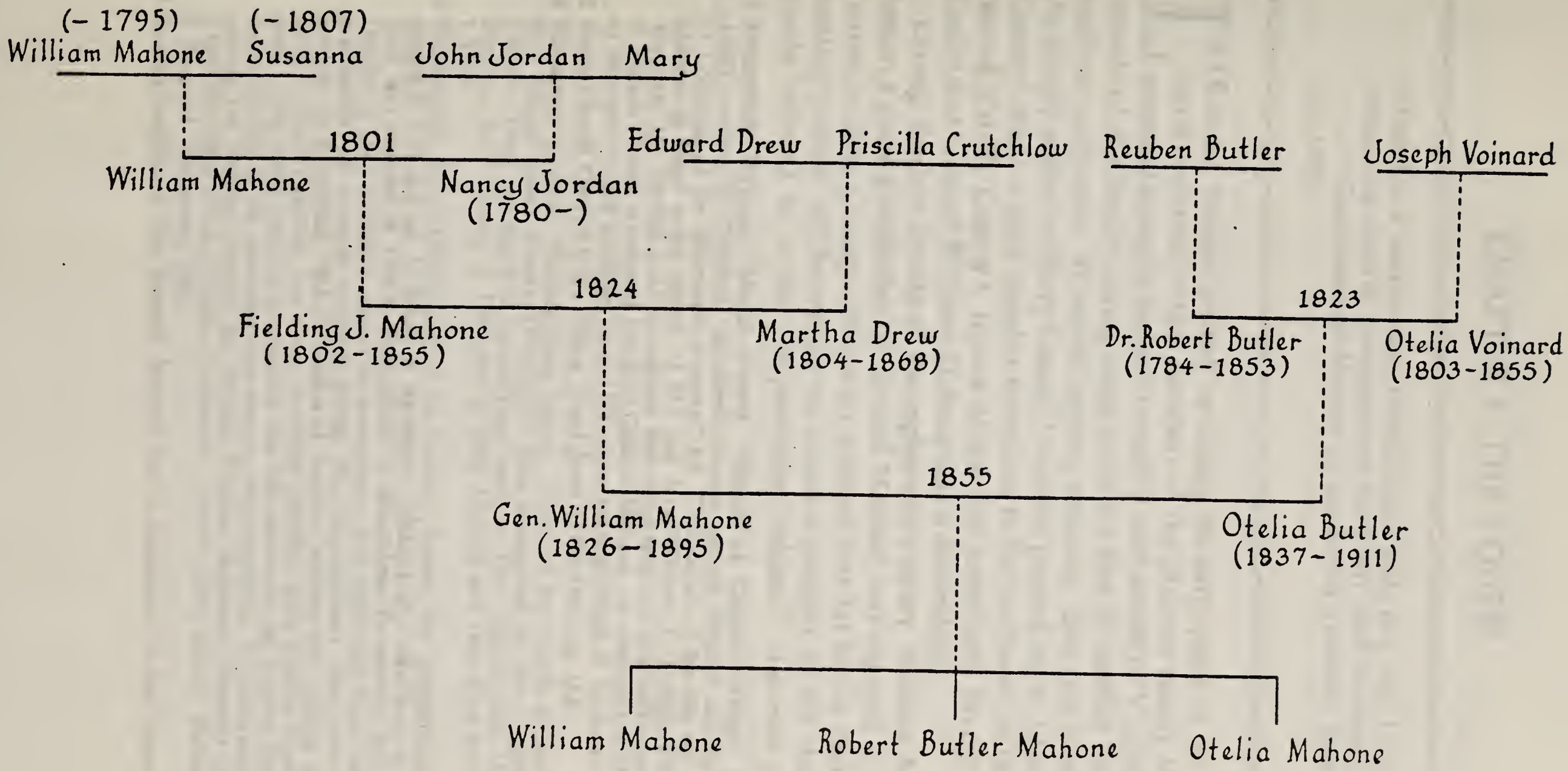
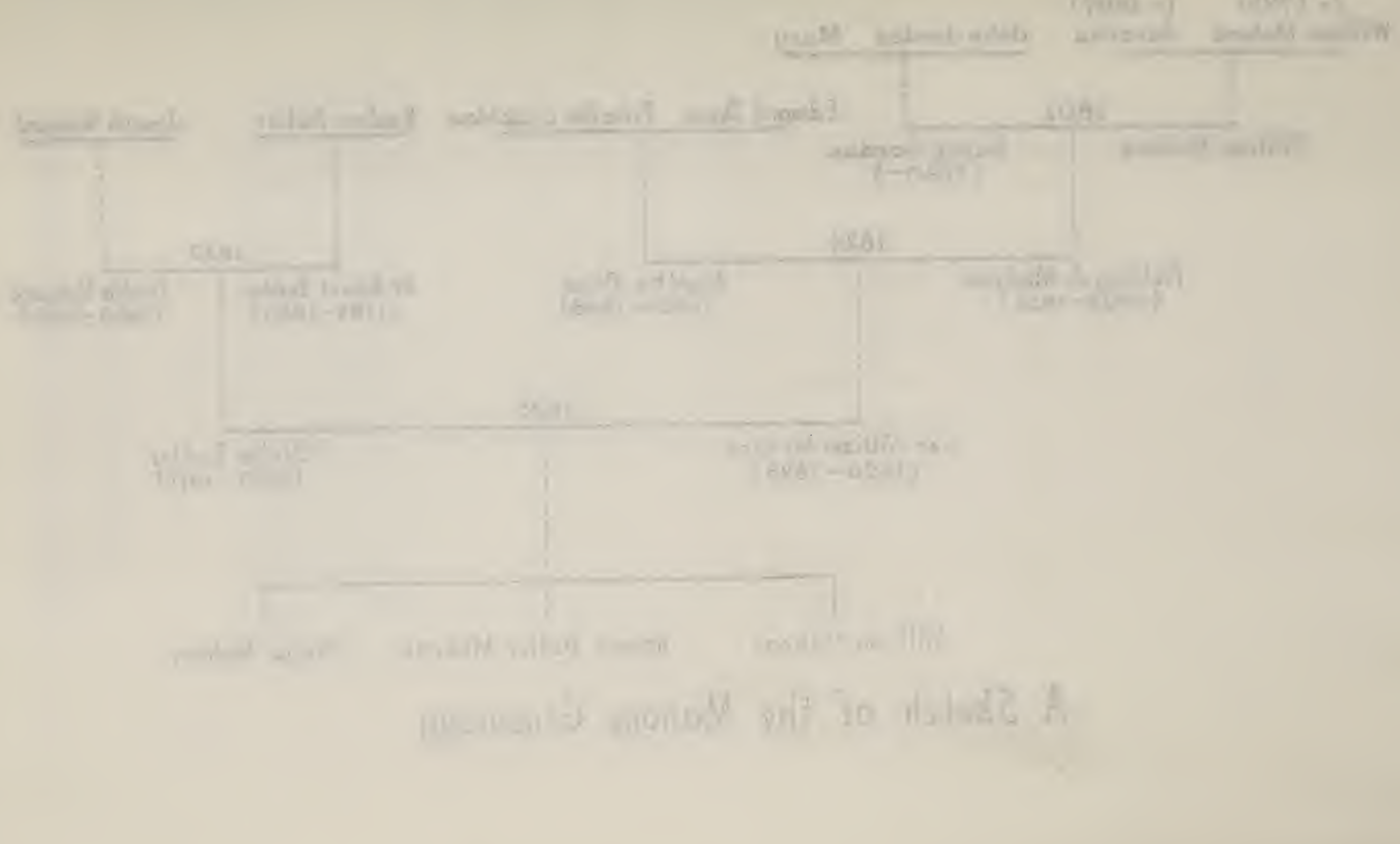
WILLIAM MAHONE OF VIRGINIA

Soldier and Political Insurgent

General Mahone was a man absolutely devoid of fear. He did the right thing as he saw it under all circumstances without regard to consequences. He was the most influential political figure which Virginia has produced since the days of Thomas Jefferson. Statement of Judge Edmund Waddill, Junior, Richmond, Virginia.



A Sketch of the Mahone Genealogy



CHAPTER I: THE YOUTH

"There was a sandy-haired, freckled-faced little imp who hung around the stores in Jerusalem, and was a very devil on wheels. . . ." Description of Mahone in the *Boston Traveller,* June 19, 1886.

LATE in the colonial period[1] or during the early years of the American Revolution certain members of the Mahone family left their ancestral home in Ireland to seek a new abode in Virginia. The records of the family during these years are few in number and leave much to conjecture. It would appear, however, that one member of the family settled in Surry County,[2] another pressed on to Chesterfield County,[3] while a third member moved on to the southwest in the direction of Patrick County.[4] It was of the first mentioned branch of the family that General William Mahone was a descendant.

During the last decade of the eighteenth century William Mahone, Senior, a great-grandfather of General Mahone, was engaged as a small farmer in Surry County. While his position was far below that of the wealthy planter still he was by no means a member of the class commonly referred to as the "impoverished whites."[5] He was not the

1 Petersburg, Virginia. *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), written by "Eminent and Representative men of Virginia and the District of Columbia of the Nineteenth Century," p.l. This sketch of the life and work of Mahone is found in the papers of Mr. and Mrs. William L. McGill, Petersburg, Virginia. Mr. McGill is of the opinion that the article was originally prepared by S. Bassett French, a personal friend of General Mahone. It contains a brief account of Mahone's varied activities up to 1892, three years previous to his death.

2 Surry Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book* (1789-1801), p. 113.

3 Richmond, Virginia. Virginia State Library. Many of the records of the Chesterfield Circuit Court Clerk's Office have been transferred to the Virginia State Library. Here one may find the marriage bonds of Peter Mahone and Mary Ann Flournoy for February 6, 1784, and of John Mahone and Jane Paul for January 1, 1803.

4 Washington, D. C. Department of the Interior. Among the Revolutionary Land Grants is a record of Archilus, or Archelaus, Mahone who was born in 1744 or 1745, was married in 1768 to Magdalena, or Magdelina, Bridgeman, and died on January 6, 1842, leaving a number of descendants. His application for a land grant, presumably for services rendered during the Revolutionary War, was without success. In September, 1843, the widow of Archilus Mahone was residing in Stokes County, North Carolina, just across the State boundary from Patrick County, Virginia. This would lead one to conclude that this branch of the Mahone family had moved further to the southwest than the two other branches. For information concerning the Virginia counties see Morgan Poitiaux Robinson, *Virginia Counties: Those Resulting From Virginia Legislation.* Virginia State Library Bulletin, Vol. 9, Nos. 1-3. Richmond, 1916.

5 Bruce's implication that General Mahone was a descendant of the "impoverished

possessor of a large estate nor the owner of slaves but his last will and testament clearly indicates that he was not without real and personal property.[6] A study of this document leads one to the conclusion that he was a small farmer of modest means and limited education.

No documentary evidence is available to indicate that William Mahone had a part in the Revolutionary War.[7] This does not definitely establish, however, that he was not engaged in the conflict, for the military records of this period are extremely fragmentary. There is a possibility, too, that he may not have arrived in Virginia until after the close of the war.

William Mahone, Senior, and his wife Susanna were the parents of six children, two boys and four girls. The sons were named James and William and the daughters were Nancy, Sally, Patsy and Lucy. The father died about the middle of the year 1795. According to the terms of his last will and testament, drawn up on February 24, 1795, his son, William, was to be given fifteen pounds when he reached the age of twenty-one. His wife Susanna was granted "during her natural life all the residue and remainder of my Estate, real and personal of what kind soever, all debts which are now or may hereafter become due to me, after paying all just debts due by me and the legacy to me [sic] son William above mentioned." The will further provided that upon the death of the mother there was to be a distribution among the children of the household furniture and of the money arising from the sale of the property. James and William were made the executors of their father's will.[8]

On July 6, 1795, the two brothers, as executors of the Mahone estate,

whites" of Virginia has little, if any, basis in fact. Philip Alexander Bruce, *Virginia, Rebirth of the Old Dominion,* Chicago and New York, 1929, 5 vols., II, 152.

6 Surry Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book* (1789-1801), p. 113.

7 In this connection one should consult the following: Louis Alexander Burgess, *Virginia Soldiers of 1776,* compiled from documents on file in the Virginia land office; together with material found in the archives department of the Virginia State Library, and other reliable sources, Richmond, 1927, 2 vols.; Hamilton James Eckenrode, *List of the Revolutionary Soldiers of Virginia;* special report of the Department of Archives and History for 1911. H. J. Eckenrode, archivist, Richmond, 1912; Hamilton James Eckenrode, *List of the Revolutionary Soldiers of Virginia,* (supplement). Special report of the Department of Archives and History for 1912. H. J. Eckenrode, archivist, Richmond, 1913; Hamilton James Eckenrode, *List of the Colonial Soldiers of Virginia.* Special report of the Department of Archives and History for 1913. H. J. Eckenrode, archivist, Richmond, 1917; Joseph Thompson McAllister, *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War; McAllister's data,* Hot Springs, Virginia, 1913; Joseph Thompson McAllister, *Index to Saffell's List of Virginia Soldiers in the Revolution,* Hot Springs, Virginia, 1913; and the official records in the Adjutant General's Office, War Department, Washington, D. C.

8 The last will and testament of William Mahone, Senior, is recorded in Surry Cir-

purchased a tract of land in Isle of Wight County from Jesse Holliman and his wife, Charity. The farm was desirably located and contained about one hundred acres of land. Holliman had purchased it in 1786 for ninety-two pounds, ten shillings, but he and his wife now sold it to the Mahone brothers for "eighty five pounds current money of Virginia to them in hand paid."[9] With the purchase of this farm William moved from Surry County to Isle of Wight, which adjoins it on the south-east.[10]

William Mahone was married to Wilmuth Womble on February 18, 1797.[11] No record save the marriage bond remains to testify to their union. It would appear, however, that the wife lived only a few months after her wedding. On May 16, 1801, William Mahone was married a second time to Nancy Jordan, the daughter of John Jordan and his wife, Mary. William and Nancy were the parents of Fielding Jordan Mahone who, in turn, was the father of General William Mahone.[12]

Little information can be gleaned concerning the Mahone family in the years immediately following. In December, 1803, William Mahone, according to a statement in his notebook, "imbraced religion" and was immersed.[13] This religious experience seems to have exerted a marked influence upon his life for in the following years a part of his time was occupied as an itinerant preacher.[14] In all probability he was affiliated with one of the smaller and more demonstrative religious bodies. The period of the "Great Awakening"[15] in Virginia had passed, but religious revivals were still promoted by frequent camp meetings in

cuit Court Clerk's Office, *Deed Book* (1789-1801), p. 113. Susanna Mahone lived until 1807. After her death her two daughters, Sally and Patsy, or Patsey, each received "one feather bed and furniture" appraised at $15.00 Virginia currency. Courtland, Virginia. *Manry Papers.* This information is found in an old notebook of William Mahone now in the possession of Lucius L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, a nephew of General William Mahone.

9 Isle of Wight Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book,* No. 17, p. 283.

10 James Mahone may have remained in Surry County. In any event he was married in Surry County in 1796. See the marriage bonds in the Surry Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

11 See the marriage bonds of the Isle of Wight County at the Virginia State Library. Here also are found the marriage bonds of William Mahone's sisters. Sally was married to Micajah Mountfort on March 9, 1797; Patsy to Benjamin Pitman on January 20, 1802; and Lucy to William Moring, the date being uncertain.

12 William Mahone was married a third time on December 24, 1828, to Patsey Fatheree. Marriage bonds of the Isle of Wight County, Virginia State Library.

13 "William Mahone imbraced religion by Immercion Sunday morning before preaching begun. December meeting, 1803." *Manry Papers.* Mahone Notebook.

14 Conversations with Lucius L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia.

15 Wesley M. Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790,* Durham, North Carolina, 1930, Chapters V, VII. Also see Robert B. Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia,* Richmond, 1810.

different sections of the State. During all these years, however, Mahone was chiefly occupied with the care of his small farm.[16]

In the War of 1812 William Mahone served as a private in Captain James Atkinson's Company of Infantry, the 29th Virginia Militia, and later in Charles Wrenn's Company of the same regiment.[17] It is likely that this body of militia was composed of men from Surry and Isle of Wight counties, and Wrenn probably succeeded Atkinson as captain of this particular company.[18] According to the official records Mahone enlisted on March 13, 1813, and was discharged on July 10 of the same year. Although he participated in the conflict for only a short period he is said to have served "with distinction."[19]

Fielding Jordan Mahone, the only child of William Mahone and Nancy Jordan, was born on March 18, 1802.[20] He was trained as a merchant by a Mr. Welch of Petersburg.[21]. Upon reaching manhood he moved from Isle of Wight to Southampton County where he became a country merchant engaged in the operation of several stores. About 1824 he married Martha Drew who lived nearby in Hertford County, North Carolina.[22] After the marriage they settled in Monroe, Southampton County.[23]

16 *Manry Papers.* Mahone Notebook.

17 Washington, D. C. War Department, Adjutant General's Office. The official records show that there were three William Mahones of Virginia who engaged in the War of 1812. They were: (1) William Mahone, whose record is herewith given; (2) William Mahone, private in Captain Isaac Tinsley's Company, 8th Virginia Militia. He enlisted on September 2, 1814, and was discharged on February 23, 1815. He was stationed at Camp Carter near Richmond, on November 11, 1814; (3) William Mahone, private in Captain John Crichlow's Company of Artillery, 65th Virginia Militia. He enlisted on August 29, 1814, and was discharged on November 2, 1814. The relationship of these three William Mahones is not clear. Lucius L. Manry identifies the first-named as his great-grandfather, and the grandfather of General William Mahone. *Personal Papers.* L. L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, December 15, 1930.

18 *Personal Papers.* L. L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, December 15, 1930.

19 Richmond *Dispatch,* Oct. 9, 1895. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* New York, 1894, V, 12.

20 *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), p.1.

21 Lexington, Virginia. *Virginia Military Institute Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone." This sketch was written, or at least revised, by Colonel Joseph R. Anderson of the Virginia Military Institute, and may be found among the papers of that institution at Lexington. The sketch is brief and contains certain minor inaccuracies. It deals primarily with Mahone's military activities during the early days of the War Between the States.

22 The Hertford County courthouse was burned by northern soldiers during the War Between the States and many records were either destroyed or lost. Probably the marriage bond of Fielding Mahone and Martha Drew disappeared at this time. *Personal Papers.* R. H. Majette, Como, North Carolina, to N. M. Blake, Aug. 7, 1930.

23 Monroe was formerly known as Brown's Ferry, probably because of the promi-

Martha was the daughter of Priscilla Crutchlow and Edward Drew[24] who served "with distinction" in the War of 1812.[25] She had a brother, Jerry, and two sisters, Nancy and Priscilla. Martha was born on April 26, 1804,[26] and was about twenty years of age at the time of her marriage to Fielding Mahone. Little is known regarding her family but she is said to have possessed marked "intelligence and strength of character."[27]

The little town of Monroe was located on the banks of the Nottoway River about eight miles below Jerusalem, now Courtland.[28] Early in the nineteenth century it derived some importance from the fact that it served as the port of entry on the Nottoway.[29] Smaller vessels which came into Albemarle Sound were able to proceed northward by way of the Chowan and Nottoway rivers as far as Monroe. In a day when water transportation was of prime importance Monroe occupied a strategic position. A rope ferry was in operation across the river giving rise to considerable land travel and transportation to the east and west.[30] There were several stores at Monroe and traders came there from quite a distance.

It was in this little town[31] that William Mahone was born on Decem-

nence of the Brown family in the vicinity. Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book*, No. 19, pp. 506, 507.

24 *Personal Papers.* Mrs. Hugh Lee, Como, North Carolina, to N. M. Blake, Sept. 6, 1930. Here the name is given as Crutchloe, but Crutchlow seems to have been the more common spelling of the name.

25 Both of General Mahone's grandfathers "served with distinction in the War of 1812." *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* V, 12.

26 *Personal Papers.* Mrs. Hugh Lee, Como, North Carolina, to N. M. Blake, Aug. 28, 1930.

27 *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone," (1892), p.1.

28 The town has long since passed out of existence and, at the present time (1935) there are few remains to suggest its exact location. The site may be reached without difficulty by following the county road which runs in a southeastern direction from Courtland. Only a few homes may be found in this section where the lazy Nottoway flows southeastward to join the Blackwater and form the Chowan River. The remains of a wharf and an old dam are still visible, and near the right bank of the river may be found traces of old cellars and fragments of bricks and other building materials.

29 "I am satisfied from what I have always learned about it, it was a good size little town, and much business was carried on there along about 1830." *Personal Papers.* L. L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Dec. 15, 1930. "I have heard Monroe was a port of entry, but I find no records anywhere as to this, only old people tell me this." *Ibid.,* Idem to Idem, Dec. 24, 1930.

30 There is now a substantial bridge across the river where once the ferry operated.

31 The house in which Mahone was born is excellently preserved. The site is commonly referred to as the Monroe tract, or Monroe farm, and is favorably located about a half-mile above the river crossing. The residence is a stately two-story dwelling, constructed entirely of handmade brick. It contains eight large rooms, each one with a fireplace, those on the lower floor being surmounted by ornate

ber 1, 1826.[32] At the time his father was engaged as a merchant in Monroe and in the surrounding territory. It is barely possible, too, that he was employed as an import and export official at Monroe.[33] He was the owner of considerable farming land in the neighborhood.[34] By everyone in the community he was recognized as a cool and courageous man, one who was slow to engage in a difficulty, but, once started, would press his adversary to the finish.[35] He was an unhesitating friend of the oppressed and would never allow any person, whether stranger or acquaintance, to be imposed upon or mistreated. His humanitarian attitudes and love of fair play extended to the negro as well as the white man.[36]

When William was less than five years of age the Nat Turner Insurrection occurred in Southampton County. The leader of this atrocious slave uprising was Nat Turner, "a wild, fanatical Baptist preacher,"[37] who was born the property of Benjamin Turner. It is an interesting coincidence that Nat Turner was born in 1800, the same year in which John Brown was born, and the very year in which Gabriel Prosser incited the Gabriel Insurrection in Henrico County. Nat was a restless and inquisitive youth who became obsessed with the consciousness of his superior mental ability. To this there was added a strange mixture

hand carved wooden mantelpieces. The floors are made of durable heart pine wood. The ceilings are high and the windows numerous, providing ample ventilation in every room. A beautiful circular staircase connects the first and second floors. The commodious porch at the front and side of the house was probably added many years after the completion of the original structure. Official records in the Southampton County courthouse would indicate that the house was built and originally occupied by Dr. Samuel Browne and members of his family. In turn it has been in the possession of Nelson H. Hodges, Fielding J. Mahone, Edward C. Crumpler, Joseph G. Crumpler, Cordy C. Whitfield, and Sam E. Whitfield, the present occupant. Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office, *Deed Book,* No. 19, pp. 506, 507; No. 26, p. 563; No. 32, pp. 273, 274, 674, 675; No. 33, pp. 177, 178, 227, 228.

32 *Manry Papers.* "Mahone Genealogy." William was the only son in the family. He had an older sister, Nancy Jordan, who was born February 4, 1825, and a younger sister, Susanna Crutchlow, born on March 13, 1830. When he was still very young William was saved from drowning by his older sister after falling in a spring only a short distance from his home.

33 Suggested by Lucius L. Manry, a grandson of Fielding Mahone, but not definitely established by official records.

34 Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book,* No. 19, pp. 227, 506, 507. In the succeeding years Mahone purchased other farming land near Monroe, as well as several town lots. Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office, *Deed Book,* No. 20, p. 295; No. 22, p. 246; No. 23, pp. 40, 41, 42, 189, 396, 397; No. 24, p. 228.

35 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

36 Conversations with Lucius L. Manry.

37 William Sidney Drewry, *Slave Insurrections in Virginia (1830-1865),* Washington, 1900, p. 26. This monograph is by far the most detailed and scholarly study of the Nat Turner Insurrection and its significance which has been made.

of religious mysticism and superstitution which prepared him psychologically for his nefarious scheme.

The night of Sunday, August 21, 1831, was selected as the most propitious time[38] for the execution of this malevolent plot. About ten o'clock that night Nat Turner and his handful of accomplices began their dastardly work in Boykin's District, near Cross Keys.[39] They proceeded from one unprotected farm house to another leaving behind them a trail of blood. At first it appeared that the insurgents had no fixed purpose or destination in mind but early Monday morning they turned in the direction of Jerusalem, the county seat. There were now about sixty negroes in the group, the various members being armed with guns, swords, axes or clubs. They had plundered as well as killed during the night and by this time most of them were intoxicated with apple brandy which had been found at several of the farm houses. After traveling a distance of about thirty miles with little or no resistance, during the course of which they had committed nearly sixty murders,[40] the negroes were met by a small band of whites in Parker's Field, only three miles from Jerusalem.[41]. This courageous band was soon reenforced by a party from Jerusalem and in the ensuing battle the negroes were routed and scattered without the loss of a single white man.[42]

Fielding Mahone was at Monroe at the time of the Nat Turner Insurrection. Reports of the terrible massacres reached the town early on Monday. Mahone immediately placed the members of his family on a small vessel in the Nottoway River, anchoring the boat to the trees in order that they might be relatively safe in case of a sudden attack by the negroes. He hurriedly rode off on horseback to verify the reports of the uprising. In a short time he returned to Monroe and removed his family to Jerusalem for safety until the insurrection had been suppressed.[43] Many others had adopted the same course of action and at least four hundred women and children were assembled in Jerusalem

38 The time was especially favorable since August was a comparatively idle month for slaves and Saturday and Sunday were their principal leisure days. August was also regarded as a "jubilee" month and on this particular Sunday a number of Southampton residents had gone to Gates County, North Carolina, to attend a camp meeting. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-26, 34.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

40 During the insurrection fifty-seven white people were murdered, a large majority of them being women and children. Bruce, *Virginia, Rebirth of the Old Dominion*, I, 446.

41 Drewry, *Slave Insurrections in Virginia*, pp. 50, 62, 64.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

43 *Personal Papers.* L. L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Dec. 24, 1930.

during this crucial period when only a few white men were left in town to protect them.[44]

As lieutenant colonel of the Southampton County militia Fielding Mahone had a definite part in overthrowing the Nat Turner Insurrection.[45] The engagement near Jerusalem was particularly significant and the residents of the town still regard it as "the most important battle on record."[46] A victory by the blacks would have exposed the refugees at Jerusalem to death and dishonor and would have enabled the negroes to gain arms, ammunition and recruits. The stubborn resistance of the whites at Parker's Field, however, and their subsequent success at Belmont were sufficient to quell the insurgents. The militia and citizens of Southampton County were admirably assisted by cavalry troops from other Virginia counties and from North Carolina.[47] By Thursday, August 25, all of the rebels except Nat Turner were either captured or killed. Not until Sunday morning, October 30, was this truculent leader captured. Having made a full confession of his guilt he was convicted by the court and hanged near Jerusalem on November 11, 1831.[48] This uprising profoundly stirred the people of Southampton County and of all Virginia. It led to the famous Virginia Slave Debates of 1832 and to a renewed interest in other sections of the country regarding the problem of slavery.[49]

It was during this decade that the first railroads in the United States were being constructed. In 1832 the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad was incorporated by the General Assembly of Virginia, and in 1833 by the General Assembly of North Carolina.[50] It was to extend from Weldon, North Carolina, to Portsmouth, Virginia, a distance of eighty miles.[51] Its purpose was to establish a direct connection between Weldon, near the fall line of the Roanoke River, and Portsmouth, where

44 Drewry, *Slave Insurrections in Virginia,* p. 66.

45 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone." Fielding Mahone was regarded as "intuitively" a soldier, and during the insurrection he commanded a militia regiment. *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* V, 12.

46 Drewry, *Slave Insurrections in Virginia,* p. 66.

47 *Ibid.,* p. 84.

48 *Ibid.,* pp. 84, 91, 101.

49 *Ibid.,* p. 181. For a treatment of the Virginia Slave Debates of 1832 see Joseph Clarke Robert, *The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1832,* Duke University, 1929. (Master's Thesis.)

50 Richmond, Virginia. Corporation Commission. *Seaboard Air Line Railway, Tentative Valuation,* p. 272.

51 Henry V. Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1868-1869,* New York, 1868, p. 248.

deep water navigation was possible. The proposed railroad lay across the southern section of Southampton County and promised great things to that county in an economic way.

With the building of the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad the busy little town of Monroe began to decline.[52] Its strategic position at the headwaters of the Nottoway lost its significance as transportation by rail usurped the position formerly enjoyed by water commerce. Several station towns soon sprang up along the route of the railroad but it is interesting to note that none of them flourished for any length of time or developed to any extent.

With the decline of trade at Monroe, Fielding Mahone moved to Delaware, one of the small stations along the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad, only two or three miles north of Monroe. This was probably in the latter part of 1835, the year in which he purchased a twenty-three acre farm near Delaware from Williams Vick.[53] Here Mahone continued in the mercantile business[54] but it is apparent that his efforts met with mediocre success.[55] The construction of the railroad through Southampton County did not immediately bring to that section the economic benefits which its ardent friends had hoped for and expected.[56] Before the building of the road Weldon had already been connected by rail with Petersburg.[57] There was insufficient trade emanating from Weldon for both Norfolk and Petersburg, and Petersburg continued to receive the larger share of the commerce.[58]

52 *Personal Papers.* L. L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Dec. 24, 1930.

53 Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book,* No. 23, p. 595. In 1832 Mahone had sold a good deal of farm land in the vicinity of Monroe, and in 1836, he sold a portion of his town property there to La Fayette Brown for $400.00. Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book,* No. 22, pp. 136, 137, 255-259; No. 23, pp. 584-586.

54 *Personal Papers.* L. L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Dec. 24, 1930.

55 The records in the Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office for this period show that Mahone still owned town lots in Monroe and farm land in that vicinity, but his real and personal property were sometimes mortgaged because of debts which he had contracted for various purposes. See *Deed Book,* No. 23, pp. 704, 705; No. 24, pp. 163, 164, 463; No. 26, pp. 563, 564; No. 27, p. 346.

56 The Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad Company disposed of its property, rights and franchises, at foreclosure sale on September 4, 1846, to the Board of Public Works of Virginia, who under the provisions of a special act of incorporation became a body corporate under the name of the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad Company. Richmond, Virginia. Corporation Commission. *Seaboard Air Line Railway, Tentative Valuation,* p. 272. This railroad is now a part of the Seaboard Air Line Railway. *Ibid.,* p.1.

57 This was the Weldon and Petersburg Railroad. Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1868-1869,* p. 304.

58 Howard Douglas Dozier, *A History of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad,* Boston and New York, 1920, pp. 29, 30.

In 1840 Fielding Mahone moved to Jerusalem, a small town on the Nottoway River about six or seven miles northeast of Delaware. Here he purchased a town lot and tavern from Benjamin Lamb for $2,000.00[59] and entered into the hotel business.[60] During the next few years he acquired several other town lots and considerable farming land adjoining the town[61] but seems to have devoted most of his attention to the care of the tavern. He was the owner of several slaves, among which were Minger, a male, and Tabb and Jerush, who were sisters.[62] They served the family more in the capacity of household servants than field hands and were treated kindly by their master.

Fielding Mahone and his wife were the parents of three children, Nancy, William and Susanna. In 1840 Nancy was 15, William 13, and Susanna 10. Their father seems to have possessed native ability as a mathematician[63] and was something of an English scholar as well.[64] William gained his primary education "at the hands of the country schoolmaster," but received special instruction from his father in mathematics.[65]

There are no contemporary descriptions of William during his boyhood days in Jerusalem but a brief and picturesque delineation of his youth appeared many years later in a northern newspaper.[66] The narrative records that

there was a sandy-haired, freckled-faced little imp who hung around the stores in Jerusalem, and was a very devil on wheels. He smoked, chewed and cussed like a pirate, and gambled like a Mississippi planter. He was the leader in all

59 Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book,* No. 24, p. 429.

60 *Personal Papers.* L. L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Dec. 24, 1930. General Mahone's father was "an Irishman and keeper of a tavern at Jerusalem." William C. Pendleton, *Political History of Appalachian Virginia,* Dayton, Virginia, 1927, p. 378.

61 Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office, *Deed Book,* No. 24, p. 462; No. 25, pp. 2, 27; No. 26, p. 242; No. 27, p. 305; No. 28, p. 102.

62 *Personal Papers.* L. L. Manry, Courtland, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, June 27, 1932.

63 Fielding Mahone was "intuitively a mathematician." *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* V, 12.

64 Fielding Mahone was "noted as an English scholar and mathematician." *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

65 Authentic information regarding William's early education is difficult to obtain. While residing at Monroe he is reported to have been a student of Len Cobb at the old White Oak Spring Schoolhouse on the Franklin road, about a mile from Monroe. The *Tidewater News,* Franklin, Virginia, June 3, 1932. After moving to Jerusalem it appears that he and his sister Nancy attended school for a short time at Rosedale, about five miles from their home. This private school was held at the home of Captain William J. Sebrell and was conducted by Hannah and Sarah Armstrong, natives of Maine. Conversations with Rena F. Sebrell, Norfolk, Virginia.

66 Quoted from an article, "Southern Side Lights," in the *Boston Traveller,* June 19, 1886.

deviltry, and the terror of all good country mothers whose boys occasionally went to town. Every good boy was cautioned to look out for that "bad little wretch, Billy Mahone."

The author of the article does not stop here but relates that "mischievous as he was, Billy rose steadily above all the good boys in the county" and by genius and grit was able to gain remarkable influence in his native State.

This picture of Mahone, while somewhat exaggerated for purposes of effect, is essentially true. William was always a "delicate" child[67] and small for his age.[68] His sandy hair and freckled face were a natural corollary of his Irish ancestry and active, outdoor life. Since his father was an innkeeper at Jerusalem it was only natural that William would spend a good deal of time in the tavern and around the stores of the little town. Particularly at his father's hotel he must have come into contact with travelers of all descriptions. One can hardly be surprised that in such an environment he should have acquired certain objectionable habits which were so current in that day.[69]

While William's early years were not attended by the comforts and privileges which life on a plantation might have afforded, still his varied experiences as a youth were not without definite value to him. As a mere child he often watched the ferryboat at Monroe and saw the small river boats arriving and departing on the Nottoway River. A little later he thrilled to the sound of the railroad engine as it stopped at Delaware and then continued on its way down the recently constructed tracks of the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad. In Jerusalem he was granted considerable freedom by his parents. For a time he even carried the mail by horseback from his home town to Hill's Ford, now Emporia.[70] These experiences at home and on the road gave him an opportunity to develop initiative and self-reliance to a marked degree. In this respect he was more fortunate than many of "the good boys in the county" whose strict supervision offered less opportunity for the development

67 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone." Throughout his life Mahone was bothered by dyspepsia which made it necessary for him to guard his diet very carefully.

68 When fully matured Mahone was only about five feet five or six inches in height and weighed something less than one hundred pounds. *Personal Papers.* William L. McGill, Petersburg, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, June 13, 1934.

69 It is altogether possible that William was taught to play poker by his father and that he had frequent opportunities to improve his game by playing with the guests at the tavern. He developed considerable skill as a player and was very fond of the game. In this early period, too, he developed a fondness for tobacco and a penchant for profanity which continued with him throughout life.

70 *Dictionary of American Biography,* New York, 1933, XII, 211.

of these important traits of character. It was only natural, then, that Billy should be a leader in his gang, whether for good or evil.

When William was fifteen years of age he entered the Littletown Academy. This school was located in Sussex County about eighteen miles northeast of Jerusalem. It was a one-story frame building of small proportions. Students were given courses designed to prepare them for college, and for many years Captain Poiner served as instructor in the higher grades. The pupils paid a fixed tuition and many of the young men in the vicinity attended the academy. It was a school of high standing and a number of boarding students came from a distance to enjoy the advantages which it offered.[71]

William was a student at the Littletown Academy for two years.[72] Prominent families of the neighborhood enrolled their sons in the school, including the Dowmans, Dillards, Harrisons, Lands and Parkers. Doubtless William's training here had a social and cultural, as well as a scholastic value. One of the interesting features of the academy was the dancing school conducted by a Mr. Martine. Dancing lessons were given once each week and the belles from far and near attended.[73]

In 1844, when William was a little less than eighteen years of age, he was appointed a State cadet at the Virginia Military Institute.[74] This institution, established by an Act of the General Assembly in 1839, had been opened to students the same year.[75] It was located at Lexington, in picturesque Rockbridge County. Apparently William had already given evidence of ability and promise, for in securing a State cadetship he was "aided by those whom his talents and character had interested

71 *Personal Papers.* Mrs. R. H. Stephenson, Senior, Homeville, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Aug. 7, 1930.

72 "William's early education was acquired largely under his father's supervision, with two years attendance at school." *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* V, 12.

73 *Personal Papers.* Mrs. R. H. Stephenson, Senior, Homeville, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Aug. 7, 1930.

74 The appointment was dated June 29, 1844. *Personal Papers.* Colonel William Couper, Lexington, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, July 11, 1932. In this connection Mahone is reported to have written to a friend, "I went to Lexington of my own notion, my parents then being in somewhat straightened circumstances. I determined not to be a burden upon them, so I went to work, and in various ways earned sufficient money while but a boy at home, to cover my expenses at the institute, where I was admitted as a state cadet, and my expenses in part provided for." *Boston Herald,* October 9, 1895.

75 *The Encyclopedia Americana,* New York, 1920, XXVIII, 128. Several acts were passed relating to the founding of Virginia Military Institute. The first of these, passed on March 22, 1836, was amended on March 22, 1837. The final Act of March 29, 1839, repealed the Act of 1836. *Personal Papers.* Colonel William Couper, Lexington, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, July 11, 1932.

in him."[76] The appointment as State cadet gave the student free board and tuition and also cared for certain miscellaneous expenses. In return for these concessions the student pledged himself to teach school for two years after graduation. Without an appointment it is hardly likely that William would have been able to enter the institution, for the expenses of the pay cadet, including clothing, averaged about $250.00 a year.[77]

Mahone matriculated on July 20, 1844.[78] At that time a three-year course was offered, but the next year the four-year course was inaugurated.[79] In 1844 there were twenty-seven State cadets and sixty-three pay cadets enrolled.[80] Mahone was perhaps "less prepared for the course than any member of his class" and found the scholastic requirements quite difficult.[81] His best work was done in mathematics[82] and his poorest in French.[83] In general merit he stood sixteenth in a class

76 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," p. 5. It is difficult to ascertain with certainty who was most influential in securing this appointment for William Mahone. It has been suggested that Henry A. Wise, the Virginia statesman, was primarily responsible for it. This is extremely doubtful, however, for on February 8, 1844, Henry A. Wise resigned his seat in the United States Congress to serve as Minister to Brazil. Barton H. Wise, *The Life of Henry A. Wise of Virginia, 1806-1876,* New York, 1899. pp. 104, 105. In this connection the following note is of interest: "Although our faces are not familiar to each other, still I feel that we are not strangers though I have not seen you since you were a youth of sixteen, & I a clergyman of twenty-six; you, setting out, as a State Cadet to the Institute with my recommendation as your passport to admission, & I remaining in Southampton." Petersburg, Virginia, *Mahone collection.* Manuscripts. Edmund Withers, Norward, Nelson C[oun]ty, to William Mahone, Sept. 29, 1870.

77 *Personal Papers.* Colonel William Couper, Lexington, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Aug. 20, 1930. Colonel Couper states that all of the catalogues of Virginia Military Institute for this period read as follows: "The Institute supplies to the State Cadet his board, tuition, fuel, lights, books, mattrass, [sic] medical attendance, and stationary; and in consideration thereof, he is required to teach two years after graduation. The Pay Cadet is at his own expense, which averages $250 per year, for every charge, *including clothing.* The State Cadets are selected from those who are unable to bear their expenses."

78 *Ibid.,* Idem to Idem, March 1, 1930.

79 *Ibid.,* Idem to Idem, Aug. 20, 1930.

80 *V. M. I. Papers.* Official Catalogue.

81 *Ibid.,* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone." Writing to a friend Mahone said, "I had a hard time there, the first year especially, from the want of previous preparation, my classmates having been prepared for the first year's course by going over it at good preparatory schools. However, I pulled through not without some credit to myself." *Boston Herald,* Oct. 9, 1895.

82 In this connection Mahone is reported to have said, "The best part of my early education I received at home from my father; all my knowledge of mathematics, before going to Lexington, I received from him, and I entered the institute the best arithmetician in the class." *Boston Herald,* Oct. 9, 1895.

83 In a class of twenty-seven Mahone stood ninth in mathematics, fifteenth in drawing,

of twenty-seven. He was very much dissatisfied with his showing, and at the close of the year desired to become a member of the class just then entering the institution. However, Colonel Charles H. Dimmock, a member of the Board of Visitors, was able to persuade him to continue with his class.[84]

Mahone's second year at the Institute was successful from several standpoints. The difficulties which he experienced during the first year were overcome to a large extent. In general merit he stood fourth in a class of fifteen, and in conduct was at the head of the class. Again his best work was done in mathematics, while French and Latin continued to prove difficult.[85] During the year he served as sergeant major in the cadet corps.

In his final year Mahone ranked with the best members of his class in the military and scientific courses, such as tactics, engineering, mathematics and chemistry. In the languages, however, he still met with marked difficulty.[86] No doubt this was due to the fact that he was less interested in these subjects and therefore devoted less time and attention to them. In general merit he stood eighth in a class of thirteen. During the year he served as cadet adjutant, which in itself testifies to his proficiency in military activities.

Mahone graduated in the summer of 1847. The diplomas were presented to the candidates by Colonel F. H. Smith, Superintendent of the Institute, on Monday, July 5.[87] Mahone's health was so poor at the time that he determined to remain there until the fall, serving as in-

and twenty-third in French. In "conduct" he stood twentieth. *V. M. I. Papers.* Official Catalogue.

84 *Ibid.,* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

85 In a class of fifteen, Mahone stood second in mathematics, ninth in drawing, thirteenth in French, and fourteenth in Latin. *Ibid.,* Official Catalogue.

86 In a class of thirteen Mahone stood first in tactics, second in engineering, mathematics and natural philosophy, third in chemistry, ninth in drawing, twelfth in geography, and thirteenth in English, French and Latin. In "conduct" he stood ninth. *Ibid.*

87 The graduation exercises were held on July 5, rather than on July 4, since the latter date fell on Sunday in 1847. Many years later when Mahone was actively engaged in politics the story was circulated that he had never received a diploma from the Institute. This story may have had its origin in the fact that another member of the class of 1847 actually refused his diploma that year. More than likely, however, the rumor was the willful creation of Mahone's political enemies who sought to disparage him in every possible way. *Personal Papers.* Colonel William Couper, Lexington, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Aug. 20, 1930; Feb. 5, July 11, 1932. The story persists to the present day, however, although the official records clearly indicate that Mahone graduated in good standing in 1847. *Personal Papers.* Henry A. Wise, Kiptopeke, Northampton County, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, March 3, 1934.

structor in the department of tactics.[88] During this brief period he may also have served as assistant instructor in mathematics and Latin.[89] It was not until the beginning of the following year that he began teaching school in accordance with his pledge as a State cadet.

Although Mahone was a State cadet there were certain expenses at the Institute which had to be cared for personally. Official records show that while the average expenses of a State cadet were $88.00 a year, Mahone's expenses were $113.00.[90] During this period he must have received some pecuniary assistance from his parents, but it does not appear that they were in a position to aid him to any considerable extent.[91] He spent a part of each summer at the home of his parents in Jerusalem. His father, now a colonel of militia in Southampton County, was proud to have William assist him in drilling the men.[92] No type of activity, on the other hand, could have appealed more strongly to the taste and talent of the son.

Throughout life Mahone felt indebted to the Virginia Military Institute for the excellent training which it afforded him. The attitude of the Institute toward Mahone was no less cordial, both because of his record as a cadet and his subsequent career as a military leader in the War Between the States. This feeling was shared by the corps of cadets as is reflected by the incident of a young man from Southampton County who entered the Institute a few years after the close of the war.[93] One of the first things which was said to him upon his entrance was that he should be grateful that he came from the same section of the State as General Mahone. He was frequently told that he would be greatly benefited if he followed Mahone's example as a cadet. And when ordered to report for neglect of duty he was reminded that "General Mahone never rewarded when work was half done."

88 *Personal Papers.* Colonel William Couper, Lexington, Virginia, to N. M, Blake July 11, 1932.

89 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

90 *Ibid.,* Official Catalogue. The State cadet had to purchase his own clothing and it is possible that Mahone spent more than the average student in this way since he was a most careful and fastidious dresser.

91 An interesting story which one hears even today is that Mahone was able to support himself at school by playing poker. It would appear to be only another of the many stories gratuitously circulated by Mahone's political enemies. There is no doubt but that he was an expert at the game, but evidence is lacking to substantiate this report.

92 Conversations with Lucius L. Manry.

93 *Personal Papers.* A. L. Gardner, Franklin, Virginia, to L. L. Manry, July 21, 1930.

CHAPTER II: THE BUILDER

"Now as Internal Improvements seem to be the order of the day far and wide, and as such must be the order of the times in the Old Dominion for years to come—I hardly think I can select for myself a more promising profession than 'Engineering,' one for which I fancy I have some taste, one at which I may rise, and one that will give exercise to both body and mind."—Quoted from a letter of Mahone to Colonel F. H. Smith, Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute, March 15, 1849.

WHILE Mahone was a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute the United States was at war with Mexico. Dr. William A. Spark, a native of Southampton County, was made paymaster of the Virginia regiment, and being a personal friend of Mahone, offered him an appointment as paymaster's clerk.[1] Mahone determined, however, to remain at the Institute until he had completed the course of study. By this time he was keenly interested in civil engineering and intent on pursuing it as a profession.

After graduating from Virginia Military Institute in the summer of 1847 Mahone's efforts to secure employment at engineering were without success. He was recommended for an appointment to the Army by Judge John Y. Mason of Virginia, then Secretary of the Navy under President Polk,[2] but this prospect failed to materialize. Expressing a belated interest in serving as paymaster's clerk under Dr. Spark in Mexico, he found that the appointment had already been made and could not tactfully be changed.[3] Amid such circumstances he accepted

1 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

2 *Ibid.* Very favorable recommendations were also written by a Mr. Goodwyn and several members of the Legislature to Hon. A. Atkinson. General W. H. Richardson also interested himself in the matter on Mahone's behalf. *Manry Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. J. Mahone, Oct. 3, 1848.

3 *Manry Papers.* W. Spark, Monterey, Mexico, to Colonel F. J. Mahone, Nov. 9, 1847. A portion of this letter reads: "Your kind favour I rec[eive]d a few days since. I regret very much that circumstances were such as to prevent Wm. from joining me as clerk from the first. I should greatly have preferred his doing so, as far as personal feeling was and is concerned, but to remove Mr. Spratley at this time, would I think be doing him great injustice, as it would cost him to get home as much nearly as he has saved from his wages. Whenever and in any way in which I can aid Wm. Mahone with propriety, you may rely upon my doing so, to the utmost of my ability. I have several times spoken to Judge Mason in relation to him; he is perfectly aware of his standing, and in obtaining any appropriate office which he may seek at the hands of the government he will find the Judge his friend."

The Mahone birthplace, near Courtland, Virginia
Home and Tavern of Fielding J. Mahone at
Courtland, Virginia

a position as assistant teacher at the Rappahannock Academy early in January, 1848.

The Rappahannock Academy was located in Caroline County, about twenty miles southeast of Fredericksburg, near Port Royal, on the Rappahannock River. Situated in one of the most healthful localities in Virginia it could be reached conveniently by boat from Fredericksburg to Port Royal.[4] George G. Butler was principal of the school[5] in which there were both academic and military departments.[6] Mahone began his work here with some misgiving, for in a letter to Colonel F. H. Smith he made it clear that although his health was not such "as to justify the pursuit of the duties required of State Cadets," nevertheless, in accordance with the pledge he had made, he was beginning work at the Rappahannock Academy.[7] The letter concludes with an expression of deep friendship which he enjoyed with Colonel Smith and his wife.

Mahone taught at the Rappahannock Academy until the end of the term and then returned to his home in Jerusalem for a part of the summer. Obviously his father was having financial difficulties as an innkeeper for he had found it necessary to mortgage his property in Jerusalem as security for outstanding notes.[8] Several years previous to this, William's older sister, Nancy Jordan, had married Josiah Manry and moved to a farm not far from Jerusalem.[9] His younger sister, Susanna Crutchlow, was still at home with her parents[10] and William was very much attached to her.[11]

In the latter part of August, 1848, Mahone returned to the Rappahannock Academy. An unpleasant misunderstanding arose between the principal and himself as to the length of time he should remain

4 *McGill Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. J. Mahone, Sept. 8, 1848.

5 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, George G. Butler, Nicholasville, Kentucky, to William Mahone, May 20, 1871.

6 *McGill Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. J. Mahone, Sept. 8, 1848.

7 *V. M. I. Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. H. Smith, Jan. 15, 1848.

8 Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office. *Deed Book,* No. 27, pp. 260, 261.

9 Nancy Jordan Mahone married Josiah Manry on Aug. 17, 1843. Virginia State Library. Marriage bonds of Southampton County, pp. 529, 722.

10 On Feb. 11, 1851, Susanna Crutchlow Mahone married William W. Briggs. *Ibid.,* pp. 598, 727.

11 "Before I left something was said about Sue's going with Miss Worrel to Doctor Minor's School, to that I would say nothing could be more gratifying to me, and I think if you can possible [sic] send her one year, the advantages she would doubtless reap thereby would be of great advantage to her and a gratification to yourself." *McGill Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. J. Mahone, Sept. 8, 1848.

there,[12] but the matter was peacefully adjusted by the intervention of Mahone's friends.[13] He had planned to stay at the academy for only four months but remained there until the end of the school year, in the summer of 1849.

A letter of October 3, 1848, addressed to his father, contains many references of a personal and intimate nature. He expresses regret that he has received no message from home since arriving at the academy several weeks before. He asks his father to select several ears of seed-corn which he may give to his friends residing near the academy. In the letter, too, there is the familiar request addressed to his mother asking that she send him a box containing sponge cake and a variety of tea cakes "for the boys." He states with reluctance that it will be necessary for his father to return some money he has borrowed from him in order that he may purchase winter clothing and take care of several miscellaneous expenses. There is a touch of admonition, too, when Mahone expresses the hope that his father has "ceased to use intemperately all intoxicating drinks" and that he will turn his attention "to the quiet, pleasant and industrious pursuits of life."[14]

In January, 1849, Mahone made another report to Colonel Smith of the Virginia Military Institute, regarding his work at the Rappahannock Academy.[15] Proof of his loyalty to the institution may be found in the statement that two or three of his students at the academy were thinking of applying for admission to the Institute. Doubtless they had been encouraged in such a determination by Mahone's praise of his Alma Mater. His love for the institution could never be questioned and

12 Mahone was very indignant at the manner in which Butler handled the matter and wrote to his father, "I fear I shall never have reason to look upon him as a worthy associate." Mahone decided to remain at the academy but declared to his father, "I feel that in so doing I have wronged myself." *Ibid.*

13 Chief among his friends were a Mr. Buckner, George Fitzhugh, and James E. Dickinson. *Ibid.*

14 "I hope most sincerely you have ceased to use intemperately all intoxicating drinks. You must upon mature reflection, foresee the inevitable and untimely result which an excessive indulgence must produce, one the thoughts of which must tuch [sic] the tender feeling of a father. Let me beseech, in the name of the family for which you should labour to make happy, to abstain altogether, turne [sic] your attention to the quiet, pleasant, and industrious pursuits of life." *Manry Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. J. Mahone, Oct. 3, 1848. In fairness to Mahone's father it should be stated that previous to this time he had been "an extremely abstemious man." *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

15 *V. M. I. Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. H. Smith, Jan. 18, 1849.

his loyalty to it remained unshaken despite the cruel vicissitudes of the years which followed.[16]

That Mahone seriously considered following the teaching profession permanently is clearly disclosed in a letter which he addressed to Colonel Smith on March 15, 1849.

> For some time past I have thought I would make my present vocation a profession, and could I see before me prospects of promotion, I should not *now* think of a change: But to continue through life, tho' short as it must be, a mere Instructor in an academy, is not reconcilable to my disposition; and as to turning my attention to either of the so-called learned professions, had I even a taste for either, would at this age be but to make myself more dependent, and my situation less agreeable, and not as I can think, as many do, so much more elevated; Indeed, I must think ere long the profession of the teacher will be acknowledged second to that of the Minister only.

For several reasons, however, he became convinced that he should abandon teaching and devote his time and attention to engineering. The letter continues:

> Now as Internal Improvements seem to be the order of the day far and wide, and as such must be the order of the times in the Old Dominion for years to come—I hardly think I can select for myself a more promising profession than "Engineering," one for which I fancy I have some taste, one at which I may rise, and one that will give exercise to both body and mind. Nothing I should surpose [sic] would tend more directly to restore my health which is yet delicate.[17]

Having determined upon a career as civil engineer both for personal reasons and because it seemed to offer opportunities for advancement, Mahone now sought to prepare himself for such work. He familiarized himself with Captain Williamson's treatise on engineering and became acquainted with Gillespie's study of roads and railroads.[18] His industry was speedily rewarded, for in July, 1849, upon the completion of his work at the Rappahannock Academy, he was appointed a surveyor in an engineering corps of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.[19]

16 "General Mahone was always extremely favorable toward the Institute and the Institute considered him an honored son. The political belief of those in charge of the Institute differed from that of General Mahone after the war, but even when the readjuster crowd was in charge of the state, General Mahone was always very kind in seeing that his Alma Mater was looked out for, and as I have indicated above there have been a number of his descendants in the Corps." *Personal Papers.* Colonel William Couper, Lexington, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, March 1, 1930.

17 *V. M. I. Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. H. Smith, March 15, 1849.

18 *Ibid.* See W. M. Gillespie, *A Manual of the Principles and Practice of Road-Making,* New York, 1847.

19 *V. M. I: Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

This railroad was incorporated by an Act of the General Assembly of Virginia passed on March 27, 1848.[20] The Act provided for the construction of a railroad "from Gordonsville in the county of Orange, by the way of the courthouse of that county to the courthouse of the county of Culpeper, and from thence to the City of Alexandria."[21] The first annual meeting of the stockholders of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad Company was held at Warrenton, Fauquier County, in May, 1849. At this meeting George H. Smoot of Alexandria was unanimously elected president of the company with a salary of $1,000.00 per annum and necessary traveling expenses.[22] Dr. William L. Powell and Henry Daingerfield, both of Alexandria, were elected directors of the company; Powell was also chosen vice-president.[23]

At the same meeting a resolution was passed to the effect that "the President and Directors employ competent Engineers to examine, survey, and estimate the cost of at least two routes for the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, from Alexandria to Culpeper Court House—thence to Orange Court House, and thence to Gordonsville."[24] Pursuant to this resolution Thomas C. Atkinson, a competent and experienced engineer, was secured to serve in this capacity.[25] Two surveying parties were promptly organized and work was commenced at Alexandria on June 7, and at Gordonsville on July 18, 1849.[26] It was at this particular time that Mahone was appointed a surveyor in one of the parties. Richard H. Middleton and Albert H. Campbell were appointed assistant engineers in charge of the two parties of surveyors.[27] In order to accelerate the location of the railroad a third party was organized early in 1850. John H. Shearer was placed in charge of the group, and in April began work in the vicinity of the Rappahannock River.[28]

20 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the Orange and Alexandria Rail Road Company, together with the By-Laws, &c., May, 1849." Alexandria, Virginia, 1849, p. 2.

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

25 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Proceedings of the Called Meeting of the Stockholders of the Orange & Alexandria R. R. Company, December, 1849." Alexandria, Virginia. 1850, p. 7.

26 *Ibid.*

27 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the Orange and Alexandria R. R. Company, May, 1850." Alexandria, Virginia, 1850, p. 13.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

The task of locating the railroad was divided into an eastern, a middle, and a western section, and the three surveying parties made rapid progress with their work. In the summer of 1850 Richard H. Middleton was elevated to the position of principal assistant over the three surveying parties. At the same time Mahone "was advanced to succeed him in the immediate command of his locating party," with headquarters at the Culpeper Court House.[29] During August, 1850, the definite location of the entire line was established. The total distance from Alexandria to the connection with the Virginia Central Railroad at Gordonsville was slightly more than eighty-eight miles.[30]

In his report to the stockholders in May, 1850, the president of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, George H. Smoot, painted a glowing picture of the future of the railroad. He impressed upon them the fact that "the route of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, conforms as nearly as may be, to the air line stretching from Boston in the North East to New Orleans in the South West."[31] In a few years, he told them, the line would be completed to Gordonsville. "Shall the force of attraction be arrested there?" he asked. "Shall we not see before us the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, beckoning us to Lynchburg, or rather extending its arms, and asking us to lend a helping hand, to close up by railway the insignificant distance between us."[32]

From the summer of 1849 to that of 1850 Mahone was busily engaged in the preliminary surveys and location of the railroad.[33] When the construction work was commenced late in the summer of 1850 he established his headquarters at Culpeper Court House. He served there as assistant engineer for the remainder of 1850 and all of 1851, a period of about eighteen months.[34] While thus engaged he was of-

29 *Ibid.*, Pamphlets, "Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the Orange & Alexandria R. R. Company, May, 1851." Alexandria, Virginia, 1851, p. 25.

30 On March 7, 1851, the General Assembly of Virginia passed a bill authorizing the Orange and Alexandria Railroad Company to construct "a branch of their road from some convenient point on the main stem in the County of Fauquier, to the town of Warrenton." *Ibid.*, p. 8. This branch line was about 9 miles in length. Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1868-1869*, p. 198.

31 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the Orange and Alexandria R. R. Company, May, 1850," p. 10.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 11. This optimistic outlook was more than fulfilled in the years which followed. The Orange and Alexandria Railroad is now a part of the Southern Railway System.

33 *Ibid.*, Manuscripts, J. Braché, Melbourne, Australia, to William Mahone, Jan. 26, 1865. Braché refers to himself as "your old camp companion on the Surveys of the Orange & Alexandria R. R."

34 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

fered an appointment by Commissioner John R. Bartlett as assistant engineer and surveyor in the engineering corps attached to the Mexican Boundary Commission.[35] In spite of the fact that he was favorably situated at the time, it is likely that he would have accepted the offer had he received more definite assurances regarding the salary he would be paid and the work to which he would be assigned.[36] His comment on the appointment is characteristic of the young man. Writing to Colonel Smith of the Virginia Military Institute, he declared, "Had Mr. Bartlett satisfied me I would be placed in the line of promotion & upon my own merits would depend my rise or fall, nothing could have held me back. Wherever there is something to be fought for—there I wish to be."[37]

Early in 1852 Mahone, without any solicitation on his part, was appointed chief engineer of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road Company by the president and directors of that organization.[38] This road was to extend from Fredericksburg to Gordonsville through Spotsylvania and Orange counties.[39] The plank road movement gained considerable momentum in the country from 1846 to 1856. The first of these roads was constructed in New York in 1846 and the fad spread rapidly to Pennsylvania, Michigan and certain of the southern states.[40] The movement had many staunch friends, none of them more loyal than William Gregg, the prominent factory master of South Carolina.

35 *Ibid.,* William Mahone, Culpeper Court House, to Colonel F. H. Smith, Sept. 10, 1850.

36 The offer of such an appointment is particularly significant in view of the fact that Mahone was an ardent Democrat at the time. His friends urged him not to accept, declaring that his services were more important to Virginia in that period of internal improvement. Quoted from the *Norfolk Beacon* in the Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Virginia Herald,* May 5, 1853.

37 *V. M. I. Papers.* William Mahone, Culpeper Court House, to Colonel F. H. Smith, Sept. 10, 1850.

38 *Ibid.,* William Mahone, Orange Court House, to Colonel F. H. Smith, Feb. 1, 1853. At this time Robert B. Marye of Fredericksburg was president of the company. *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Annual Report of the President to the Stockholders of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank-Road Company, at their meeting in Fredericksburg, on the 21st May, 1851: together with the reports of the Engineer and Treasurer," Fredericksburg, Virginia, p. 6.

39 Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Virginia Herald,* April 18, 1853. In Orange County the road was to effect a junction with the McAdam road running from Page County to Gordonsville. In this way it was hoped that the road would eventually be extended to the valley of Virginia. *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Annual Report of the President to the Stockholders of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank-Road Company, at their meeting in Fredericksburg, on the 21st May, 1851: together with the reports of the Engineer and Treasurer," p. 5.

40 Broadus Mitchell, *William Gregg, Factory Master of the Old South,* Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1928, pp. 152, 154.

He felt that plank roads were superior to railroads because they could be built and maintained more economically, could be constructed with the wood from the forests through which they ran, and would serve the country as well as the town.[41]

> The plank-road is capable of meeting all the wants of our country, and superior to the rail-road in every particular but that of indulging our fancy in rapidly passing from one point to another; it is so simple and cheap in its construction and management, that there is scarcely a village or an agricultural section of our country that cannot afford to build and maintain one.[42]

J. H. Shearer, one of the engineers with whom Mahone had been associated in the construction of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, preceded him as chief engineer of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road Company.[43] In his report to the stockholders of the company in 1851 Shearer had emphasized the value of the plank road to the farmer. Quoting from Gillespie, he declared that "Plank Roads are the Farmer's Rail Roads."[44] They give the farmer, he asserted, what he never had before—a good road during all seasons of the year. On plank roads his horses can draw twice the ordinary weights which are possible on common roads. The overhead expense on horse, harness and vehicle is reduced at least one-half. The farmer is enabled to take his products to the best market rather than selling them at a sacrifice in the nearby village.[45]

During 1852 Mahone was busily engaged in continuing the construction work commenced by Shearer. The general plans called for a roadbed twenty-two feet in width with a one-foot rise from the sides to the center. In the work of excavation about three and one-half feet was to be allowed on each side for drainage ditches. The foundation of the superstructure was to consist of two longitudinal stringers, or sills, four by eight inches in size and from fifteen to twenty-four feet in length. These were to be laid flatwise in a position where the wagon wheels would be most likely to run. On these longitudinal stringers and

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 154-156.

42 William Gregg, "Essay on Plank Roads," *DeBow's Southern and Western Review*, New Orleans, Louisiana, X, 667 (June, 1851). This essay appeared in *DeBow's Review* in four installments, as follows: X, 475 (April, 1851); X, 665-667 (June, 1851); XI, 63, 64 (July, 1851); and XI, 428-430 (October, 1851).

43 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Annual Report of the President to the Stockholders of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank-Road Company, at their meeting in Fredericksburg, on the 21st May, 1851: together with the reports of the Engineer and Treasurer," p. 14.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 12. This statement is quoted from Gillespie (W. M. Gillespie) and Kingsford's work on Plank Roads.

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.

at right angles to them were to be placed covering planks eight feet long and three inches thick. This would provide a plank road eight feet in width which was to be placed on the right-hand side of the roadbed as one approached Fredericksburg.[46] Such an arrangement would make it possible for the heavily loaded wagons coming into Fredericksburg to have a much more substantial roadbed than was required by the lighter wagons on their return journey.

While Mahone was engaged in constructing the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road the citizens of Norfolk were gradually awakening to the fact that the commercial future of that city would depend in a large measure upon the construction of a railroad from Norfolk far into the interior "reaching out its lateral branches in the rich valleys of the Southern and Western States."[47]

> It is now reduced to almost an axiom, that the greatest commercial prosperity in the United States is only attainable by a connection with the valley of the Mississippi; and hence from Massachusetts to Georgia, we see almost every state along the sea-coast, competing anxiously and earnestly with each other, for the shortest, cheapest and safest communication.[48]

The intense rivalry of the various Virginia cities for trade and the short-sighted policy of the state in constructing numerous short railroads instead of providing for trunk-line railways had proved most harmful to the economic development of the State.[49] The city of Norfolk, blessed with an unsurpassed harbor, a favorable climate, a rich and extensive hinterland and a close proximity to the European markets, had fallen far short of the glorious future predicted for her by Thomas Jefferson who had declared she would become the "great Emporium of the Chesapeake."[50] Patrick Henry, too, had pointed out

46 *Ibid.,* pp. 10, 11. It was admitted that a ten-foot track would be more desirable than one only eight feet in width but sound economy discouraged its adoption when the eight-foot track had proved generally satisfactory in the southern states. Many objections were cited to the double track, sixteen feet in width, which had been tried in Canada. The cost of the plank road was estimated at about $2,800.00 per mile.

47 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Norfolk and the Interior; or, Rail Roads extending from the Seaboard through Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, &c., to the Great Valleys of the West," Norfolk, 1852, p. 3.

48 *Ibid.,* p. 12. This statement was made by John Floyd, Governor of Virginia from 1830 to 1834.

49 "From Richmond four railroads and a canal diverge; from Petersburg three railroads and a river improvement; from Alexandria two railroads and a canal; and what are they all? Mere sickly shoots, starting from insufficient trunks." From the speech of H. W. Sheffey of Augusta County, Virginia, in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1850-1851. *Register of the Debates and Proceedings of the Virginia Reform Convention,* Richmond, 1851, p. 304.

50 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Norfolk and the Interior," p. 11.

that "Norfolk, not Baltimore, not Philadelphia, not New York, not Boston, not Charleston, not Savannah, was the nearest and best point for the egress and ingress of that mighty current of trade, which is now going and will continue to go, in and out of the Valley of the Mississippi, by artificial lines of intercommunication across the Alleghanies."[51] In spite of her natural advantages, however, Norfolk had failed to keep pace with her rival seaports along the Atlantic coast.

A railroad running from Norfolk to Petersburg and connecting there with other railroads extending far into the interior now seemed essential to Norfolk's economic salvation. The first step in this direction was taken in the incorporation of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad Company by the General Assembly of Virginia during the session of 1850-1851.[52] From the very beginning the importance of this railroad was understood by a large number of people and its friends waxed eloquent in support of it.

> It is the last and by no means least, *link* in the grandest scheme of Internal Improvement ever projected in the United States, forming, as it were, the *trunk* of a gigantic *tree,* deriving *soil* for its nourishment at Hampton Roads, and ramifying with its immensely long branches, *Western Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and even Missouri; Southwestern Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas;* and it may at no very distant day thrust one of its *topmost* leading limbs, even to the zenith—PACIFIC OCEAN, while its *tap root* is insinuating its minute fibres into every *European Port.*[53]

In accordance with the act of the General Assembly the Virginia Board of Public Works secured the services of Albert H. Campbell as principal engineer and Henry A. Smyth as assistant "for the purpose of surveying a route for a railroad from Norfolk to Petersburg."[54] Under their direction the preliminary surveys were made in 1851 and 1852. The report of the engineer affirmed the practicability of the scheme and called for the construction of a railroad about eighty miles in length and costing approximately $11,000.00 per mile.[55]

The building of a railroad in the southeastern section of Virginia extending through a portion of Southampton County could not fail to attract the attention of Mahone. No doubt he saw a greater future in railroads than in plank roads,[56] and there was the additional incentive

51 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
52 *Ibid.*, p. 59.
53 *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31. This statement was quoted from the *Norfolk Herald.*
54 *Ibid.*, p. 37.
55 *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 38.
56 The Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road Company by no means fulfilled the

to have a part in the upbuilding of that section of the State in which he was born and reared. Early in 1853, while he continued work on the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road from his headquarters at Orange County Court House, his friends in the Virginia Legislature and elsewhere began to manifest an interest in his appointment as chief engineer of the proposed Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad.[57] Realizing that there would be many applicants for the position, Mahone immediately secured letters of recommendation from the chief engineer and board of directors of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad Company, the president and directors of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road Company, and several others.[58] Early in April, 1853, he expressed some anxiety as to the outcome of his efforts,[59] but when the board of directors of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad Company met on April 12 he was elected chief engineer of the road at a salary of $2,500.00 per annum.[60] It would appear that his election to this important position when only twenty-six years of age was due in no small part to the hearty recommendation of Colonel F. H. Smith, superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute, based on Mahone's record at that institution and the part he had already played in the program of internal improvements in the State.[61]

Mahone's election as chief engineer of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad Company was loudly applauded at Fredericksburg.

expectations of its promoters. In 1855 Robert B. Marye was still president of the company, but Thomas J. Shaw had succeeded Mahone as chief engineer. The report for 1855 stated that the aggregate toll for the past year had been $6,190.45 as against $5,671.94 for the preceding year. The president felt, however, that the toll would have been doubled had it not been for the "blighting seasons" which had greatly diminished production in that neighborhood. He believed that an increase of 10 or 15 per cent in the toll-rate would "materially enhance the revenue of the Company" and not "be deemed unreasonable by the farming community." *Ibid.*, Pamphlets, "Annual Report of the President to the Stockholders of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank-Road Company, at their meeting in Fredericksburg, on the 16th May, 1855: together with the Report of the Engineer," Fredericksburg, Va., 1855, pp. 6-8. A modern highway from Fredericksburg to Gordonsville has long since replaced the Fredericksburg Plank Road.

57 *V. M. I. Papers.* William Mahone, Orange Court House, to Colonel F. H. Smith, Feb. 1, 1853.

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid.*, William Mahone, Richmond, Virginia, to Colonel F. H. Smith, April 1, 1853.

60 H. W. Burton, *The History of Norfolk, Virginia*, Norfolk, 1877, p. 15.

61 Quoted from the *Norfolk Beacon,* in the Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Virginia Herald,* May 5, 1853. Mahone also received the support of Dr. Francis Mallory of Norfolk, the first president of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. Frank Helvestine, "History of the Norfolk & Petersburg," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Roanoke, Virginia, Vol. I, No. 4 (September, 1923), p. 13.

In all the positions heretofore filled Mr. M. has given the most entire satisfaction, and for his years, is doubtless without a superior in his line of profession in the State.

He numbers scores of warm personal friends in this community, who will regret the sundering of social intercourse, and who will look back with pleasure to many pleasant hours of association.

Mr. Mahone is wedded to his profession—noble and generous in his impulses, he cannot prove other than a valuable acquisition to the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad, whose Directory we congratulate in thus securing eminent ability united with a spirit of indomitable energy.[62]

According to this newspaper excerpt Mahone had come to Fredericksburg "unknown and unheralded" but his work as chief engineer of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road soon gained for him "the confidence not only of those with whom he had been called upon to act, but alike the confidence of the entire community."[63] At Norfolk, as well as Fredericksburg, Mahone's election as chief engineer of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad was the subject of commendation. A Norfolk writer referred to it as "a striking illustration of what industry, morality and perseverance can achieve."[64]

Mahone's first responsibilities were the selection of an assistant engineer, the organization of one or two efficient engineering corps to continue the work of surveying, and the purchase of necessary apparatus.[65] The program of internal improvements in Virginia was in full swing and each of these objectives constituted a definite problem because of the general demand for efficient workers and mechanical supplies. Mahone's care and deliberation in the selection of an assistant and in the organization of an engineering corps indicates that he was interested in securing an efficient working organization and not in using his position for purposes of favoritism. It would have been relatively easy to organize one or two surveying parties in Fredericksburg but Mahone regarded it as his duty "to give the preference to persons in Norfolk who might be applicants."[66]

The work of surveying and locating the railroad was commenced late in the spring of 1853[67] and carried on persistently throughout the sum-

62 Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Virginia Herald,* April 18, 1853.
63 *Ibid.,* May 23, 1853.
64 *Ibid.,* May 5, 1853. Quoted from the *Norfolk Beacon.*
65 *Ibid.,* May 23, 1853.
66 *Ibid.*
67 Helvestine, "History of the Norfolk & Petersburg," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 4 (September, 1923), p. 13.

mer. The difficulties and hardships of the undertaking are well described by a contemporary.

> From the 1st of August, to the 28th of September, a period of eight weeks, 75 miles of the line were established, and 115 surveyed in connection with it. When we bear in mind the unhealthy season of the year when this work was accomplished, the nature of the country traversed, the dense forests and undergrowth—the hot sun alternated with drenching rains which prevailed in August and the thousand pests which beset our wooded low lands in midsummer, we feel bound to award our meed of praise for the energy and industry evinced on the occasion. There was, too, but one division of Engineers, divided into two parties for a time only, that performed this task. Not waiting for Assistants, which it was difficult to obtain owing to the demand throughout the country, the Principal took the field in person and pushed on with untiring diligence till his work was completed, and deserves the confidence of every true friend of the Road.[68]

By October 14, 1853, the entire route of the road had been surveyed.[69] The early opposition to Mahone, based entirely on personal grounds, was silenced by the ability and industry which he displayed as chief engineer.[70] "We doubt," declared the *American Beacon,* "whether the early history of any other road in the state can present so fair a record."[71] And a writer in the *Norfolk Daily Courier* made amends for his early opposition to the president and chief engineer of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad by declaring that "Opposition ceases to be available, when directed against those who have risen superior to its pretexts."[72]

As the work of graduation and masonry was continued the fine qualities of the railroad became more and more apparent. Foremost among these was the directness of the line. The road extended southwestwardly from Norfolk, and at Suffolk made a bend to the northwest in the direction of Petersburg, presenting "an unbroken vista, in a mathematical line, for the unprecedented distance of fifty-two miles!"[73] The additional fact that it was "established on ground in every respect the most eligible for the road" marked it as "a signal achievement in railroad history."[74] It is particularly interesting to note that the portion of the

68 *Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald,* Oct. 11, 1853.
69 Norfolk, Va., *Daily News,* Oct. 14, 1853.
70 *Norfolk Daily Courier,* Oct. 15, 1853.
71 Norfolk, Va., The *American Beacon,* Oct. 14, 1853.
72 *Norfolk Daily Courier,* Oct. 15, 1853.
73 Norfolk, Va., The *Southern Argus,* April 5, 1855.
74 *Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald,* Oct. 11, 1853.

road running through the Dismal Swamp was one of the most substantial and economically constructed sections of the entire line.[75]

Not only in the matter of surveying but also in the work of construction Mahone showed himself far in advance of many of his contemporaries. In this connection a statement of the examining committee regarding the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad is pertinent:

> The clearing is 100 feet wide throughout; the ditches are placed at its extreme limits, and the embankment is located equi-distant between the ditches. It is the design of the engineer that the sills and rails shall rest on an embankment from one end of the road to the other—a suitable width being provided in the cut for this purpose—thus insuring perpetual dryness to the bed of the road throughout. Both the cuts and embankments are of a good width, and their slopes easy. All the culverts on the line, and the abutments of bridges at the different creeks and rivers, are to be of granite, and founded on the rock-like stratum of marl which is invariably found throughout the country at a convenient depth. The streams are to be spanned with iron bridges. The road will thus be rendered, as far as possible, an imperishable structure, requiring no renovation except of the sills and rails.[76]

In another respect Mahone gave evidence of prudence and foresight. The roadbed was made wide enough for a double track and when the work of construction was commenced, the rails of the first track were laid in a permanent position on one side of the roadbed. He envisaged the day when a second track would be necessary and provided for it in this manner.[77] Despite these unusual features Mahone displayed genuine economy in all his work and the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad Company was relatively free of the monetary difficulties which were cramping and prostrating many other railroads throughout the country at that time.[78]

75 Norfolk, Virginia, The *Southern Argus,* April 5, 1855. Detailed information is lacking with regard to this remarkable engineering achievement. In Virginia it is commonly reported that "Mahone paid no attention to his critics but went ahead and overcame the imagined danger by digging a shallow canal and bedding the canal with green timber and then filling in on top of the timber with earth. In this way he constructed a floating road bed, and as the timber is in water it will never rot." *Personal Papers.* Henry A. Wise, Kiptopeke, Northampton County, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, May 15, 1934. A contemporary report reveals "that in constructing the line through Dismal Swamp, trees were first cut down, trimmed, and placed side by side the entire width of the embankment, thus making in those days what was called a corduroy road at the base." *Ibid.* Floyd E. Chabot, Roanoke, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, June 6, 1934.

76 Helvestine, "History of the Norfolk & Petersburg," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 4 (September, 1923), pp. 13, 14. See the *Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the Board of Public Works to the General Assembly of Virginia with the accompanying documents,* Richmond, 1855, p. 967.

77 Conversations with Judge Edmund Waddill, Junior, Richmond, Virginia.

78 Norfolk, Virginia, The *Southern Argus,* April 5, 1855.

In August, 1854, the *Southern Argus* expressed the belief that the road would be completed within eighteen months.[79] For various reasons, however, this was not the case. In Petersburg, strange to say, there was considerable opposition to the road.[80] And even in Norfolk many persons failed to appreciate its importance although the newspapers declared that it would prove of great economic value to the city and to the entire section through which it ran.[81] Others in Norfolk were alarmed by the debt of the city and hesitated to increase it by further investments in public works.[82] Numerous problems arose, too, in connection with the assessment of land damages along the railroad,[83] the construction of bridges,[84] and the entrance of the road into the city.[85] In the latter part of 1855 work on the railroad in the vicinity of Norfolk was partially suspended because of an epidemic of yellow fever which ravaged the city during August, September and October.[86] In May, 1856, the report of the treasurer of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad showed a balance of $14,644.33.[87] The report of the examin-

79 *Ibid.*, Aug. 12, 1854.

80 Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Virginia Herald,* March 13, 1858.

81 Norfolk, Virginia, The *Southern Argus,* Aug. 3, 1854.

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid.*, Aug. 12, 1854.

84 Particularly was there agitation regarding the construction of the bridge over the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River. "The Memorial of the Great Bridge Lumber and Canal Company" called upon the Virginia Legislature "to require the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad Company to have the draws in their bridge over the Southern Branch, to be fifty feet wide, in order that the immense number of large steamboats which will pass through the Canal will not be obstructed in their navigation of the Elizabeth." Several caustic articles appeared in the various newspapes regarding this controversy between the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad which was to connect Virginia with twenty-two of her sister states and the Great Bridge Canal which was "to connect twenty-one counties in North Carolina and *two* in Virginia with Norfolk." Norfolk, Virginia, The *Southern Argus,* Feb. 8, 11, 13, 1856; *Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald*, Feb. 9, 1856.

85 Norfolk, Virginia, The *Southern Argus,* Aug. 12, 1854.

86 Concerning this terrible scourge A. F. Leonard, editor of the *Southern Argus,* wrote, "We have seen our lately flourishing mart reduced to the scanty number of 4,000 surviving souls. In the short space of less than ninety days, out of an average population of about 6,000, every man, woman and child (almost without exception) has been stricken with the fell fever, and about 2,000 have been buried, being not less than *two* out of *three* of the whites and *one* out of *three* of the whole abiding community of Norfolk, white and black." Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 23. Among those who died during the plague were two directors and the treasurer of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad Company. Helvestine, "History of the Norfolk & Petersburg," *Norfolk and Western Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 4 (September, 1923), p. 13.

87 The total amount received from the State, from Norfolk City bonds and from individuals was $395,825.50. The total expenses for salaries, right of way, construction, equipment and miscellaneous matters was $381,181.17. This left a balance of $14,644.33. Norfolk, Virginia, The *Southern Argus*, May 20, 1856.

ing committee, however, disclosed the fact that less than half of the $600,000.00 proposed private subscription had been pledged and earnestly recommended that the remainder be taken in order that the work of construction might be continued.[88]

The high standards which had characterized the early construction of the railroad were maintained by Mahone in the purchase of material and equipment. Rails of the T pattern,[89] weighing sixty-three pounds per yard, were purchased in London[90] for the main line, sidings and streets.[91] In February, 1858, the rails were laid at Bramble's Point in Norfolk where the depot was located.[92] On March 30 Mahone announced that freight would be received for points between Norfolk and Suffolk.[93] The construction work was continued during 1858 as rapidly as the funds of the company would permit. The entire line was completed by September 1, and opened for operation on that date.[94]

Mahone's work on the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad was of such an outstanding nature as to elevate him "to the highest rank in his profession."[95] Those who viewed the road were delighted with its architectural beauty and impressed by its structural strength. The following quotation is characteristic of the words of praise which were heaped upon the engineer and his remarkable achievement:

> The whole of the work as far as we went, bore conspicuously the impress of great genius, order, and taste, on the part of the Engineer and Architect of it.

88 "The authorized capital is $1,500,000.00. Of this amount the State of Virginia is pledged to take $900,000.00 upon condition that the remaining $600,000.00 shall be made up from private sources; and if the same can be made up at once, the State will, under late special enactment, issue her bonds to the company for the residue of the amount pledged by her. Of this private subscription of $600,000.00 nearly $250,000.00 have been taken—leaving about $350,000.00 yet to be made up from private sources to ensure to the company their entire capital." *Ibid.*

89 The earliest form of rail was called the strap iron rail. This was followed by the inverted U rail which was in common use around 1850. The T rail was just being introduced at this time and Mahone was quick to appreciate its superiority over the U rail. The T rail is universally used today.

90 In 1854 the president of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad had united with other railroad heads in requesting Congress to repeal or suspend the duties on railroad iron. The request was based upon the strategic position of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad in case of war. Helvestine, "History of the Norfolk & Petersburg," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 4 (September, 1923), p. 13.

91 *Ibid.,* p. 14.

92 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 30.

93 *Ibid.,* p. 31.

94 Richmond, Virginia. Corporation Commission. *Norfolk and Western Railroad, Tentative Valuation,* p. 81.

95 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," p. 6.

Such a display of sound judgment, perfect uniformity and consistency, and fine architectural taste, we will venture to assert, does not obtain on any other road in this country. Strength, order and beauty, combined with novelty, characterizes the whole work, from the formations of the embankment to the spiking of the rail. The minutest detail seems to have been executed after mature consideration, and no part, we believe, could be changed without incurring a great risk of doing injury.[96]

In 1859 Dr. Francis Mallory resigned as president of the railroad and was succeeded by Henry Irwin.[97] Under his direction a definite schedule was established between the railroad and the steamship lines running to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.[98] The Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad also made connections with the South Side Railroad at Petersburg which, in turn, made connections with the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad at Lynchburg. At this time Mahone served as chief engineer and general superintendent. In close association with him were Henry Fink, master of transportation, and R. C. Taylor, and J. B. Tree, auditors.[99]

In April, 1860, the seventh annual meeting of the stockholders of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad Company was held in Norfolk. At this meeting, probably because of financial considerations, a decision was reached to consolidate the offices of president and chief engineer. William Mahone was thereupon elected to this position by a majority of 923 votes.[100] His selection for this responsible office at the age of thirty-three was hardly to be wondered at, for in the capacity of chief engineer he had displayed marked ability as an organizer and executor.[101] The official reports which were made at the meeting showed the

96 Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Virgina Herald,* March 13, 1858. This article, signed by "Diffidence," was copied by the *Southern Argus* of Norfolk, Virginia, on March 17, 1858.

97 Helvestine, "History of the Norfolk & Petersburg," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 4 (September, 1923), p. 14.

98 "We now have a daily line of first-class steamers to Baltimore; two lines to New York, one semi-weekly running in connection with our road; the other tri-weekly; a weekly propeller line to Philadelphia; two lines to Boston, one a semi-weekly line composed of four first-class side-wheel steamships, connecting directly with our road; the other a weekly line, composed of fine ships." Quoted from the President's Report for 1860 in the *Annual Reports of the Rail Road Companies of the State of Virginia, made to the Board of Public Works, for the year ending September 30, 1860,* Richmond, 1860, pp. 274, 275.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 291.

100 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 37.

101 A visitor to Mahone's engineering office in Norfolk in 1858 declared that, "we were delighted to see one of the most perfect labour systems, that has ever come under our observation, every officer had his special duty, and every duty was executed in a manner which showed that the most perfect system, combined with

Mahone's Engineering Activities

STATE OF VIRGINIA

Scale

1918

• Location of County Seat

Orange and Alexandria Railroad
Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road
Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad
New York and Norfolk Air-Line Railroad
City of Ocean View

railroad to be in a very satisfactory financial condition, especially in view of the disadvantages under which it had been completed.[102] Mahone assumed his additional responsibilities and continued to give his undivided attention to the administration of the railroad until the outbreak of the War Between the States called for his courage and skill in another direction.

While Mahone was employed as chief engineer there were occasional delays and interruptions in the work because of a lack of funds or other attending circumstances. He was able to make the most of these periods of inactivity by engaging in other engineering projects. He carried on surveys to the north of Norfolk and laid out a plan for the site of Ocean View.[103] More significant, however, was his work in connection with the North and South Air-Line Railroad, projected in 1854.[104] The name of the railroad was soon changed to the New York and Norfolk Air-Line Railroad, and the executive committee of the company was composed of representatives from New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.[105] Survey maps were prepared "commencing in New Jersey at Point Comfort on Raritan Bay, directly opposite to New York, and passing through the counties of Monmouth, Ocean, Burlington, Atlantic, and Cape May to Delaware Bay; and on the Peninsula, from Lewes on the southern shore of that bay, extending through Sussex County in Delaware, Worcester County in Maryland, and Accomac and Northampton counties in Virginia, to the shore of Chesapeake Bay at Cape Charles, opposite to Norfolk."[106]

The surveys for the Virginia section of the road were conducted by Mahone and his assistants for Dr. Francis Mallory and R. Simpkins.[107] The proposed route extended northward from Cape Charles through Northampton and Accomac counties, a distance of about eighty miles.

exactness and neatness, was the rule of the department." Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Virginia Herald,* March 13, 1858.

102 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 37.

103 Conversations with Judge Edmund Waddill, Junior.

104 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "The North and South Air-Line Railroad, from New York and Philadelphia to Norfolk, Virginia, May 31, 1854." New York, 1854.

105 The executive committee was composed of Charles Gould, Amory Edwards, Silas Seymour, and Peter Clark of New York; Francis W. Chetwood, James P. Allaire, and William Torrey of New Jersey; Francis Mallory and R. Simpkins of Virginia; John R. Franklin of Maryland; and John W. Houston of Delaware. *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Report of the New York and Norfolk Air-Line Railroad, September, 1854," New York, 1854, p. 8.

106 *Ibid.,* p. 1.

107 Norfolk, Virginia, The *Southern Argus,* Aug. 15, 1854.

Seventeen days of hard and enervating labor were devoted to the work of surveying in July, 1854, and the results were made available in a "Map and Profile of Instrumental Reconnaissance for the Virginia Section of the New York and Norfolk Air-Line Railway—by William Mahone, Civil Engineer."[108]

The report of the executive committee in September, 1854, declared that the New York and Norfolk Air-Line Railroad and its connecting lines would "bring Norfolk within *twelve hours,* Charleston, S. C., *thirty-five hours,* Savannah, *thirty-eight hours,* Mobile, *forty-six hours,* and New Orleans, *fifty-two hours* of the City of New York."[109] In his report on the Virginia portion of the road Mahone enthusiastically declared:

> A line of such advantages in grades, directness, and cost as this, is without its parallel in the history of railroads. I deem it unnecessary to allude to the importance of the work, as the statements heretofore submitted, have fully established the fact in the public mind. In the City of Norfolk will concentrate a vast network of railways penetrating the Southern and Western States, and this road is to connect that point with the commercial metropolis of the Union, by a route possessing unrivalled advantages. To say nothing of the large traffic which must pass over it, it will command an amount of travel that will make it one of the most productive investments for capital which the country affords. As to time, I hazard nothing in declaring, that on the Virginia portion of the line, a speed can be obtained greater than on any other road in this country. The highest speed ever achieved in England, can be here equalled, if not surpassed.[110]

In 1849 Mahone had written Colonel Smith of the Virginia Military Institute, "Now as Internal Improvements seem to be the order of the day far and wide, and as such must be the order of the times in the Old Dominion for years to come—I hardly think I can select for myself a more promising profession than 'Engineering.' "[111] The following decade proved that he made no mistake either with regard to the importance of internal improvements or the opportunities offered in the field of engineering. From 1850 to 1860 the mileage of railroads in operation in Virginia increased from 384 to 1,379—almost a thousand miles.[112] In the construction of railroads, as well as canals, plank roads

108 *Ibid.*

109 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Report of the New York and Norfolk Air-Line Railroad, September, 1854," p. 7.

110 *Ibid.,* p. 6. This railroad was built in the following years and is now a part of the Pennsylvania Railway System.

111 *V. M. I. Papers.* William Mahone, Rappahannock Academy, to Colonel F. H. Smith, March 15, 1849.

112 During this same period, from 1850 to 1860, the total railroad mileage in operation in the United States increased from 9,021 to 30,635. Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1868-1869,* pp. 19, 20.

and turnpikes, the State of Virginia generously aided individual initiative and enterprise. The Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1850-1851 completely revised the State Constitution[113] and inaugurated a period of growth and expansion in the State. This work was encouraged and promoted by Governor Joseph Johnson (1852-1856) and Governor Henry A. Wise (1856-1860), both loyal advocates of internal improvements.[114]

No other Virginian of his day was more enthusiastic over the program of state improvements or contributed more largely to its development than William Mahone. In turn he served as surveyor of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, as chief engineer of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road, and as chief engineer of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. In addition to the work required by these responsible positions he made surveys for the establishment of Ocean View and for the construction of the Virginia section of the New York and Norfolk Air-Line Railroad. His rapid rise in the field of engineering was due to his talent, initiative, energy and perseverance. Chief engineer of a plank road at the age of twenty-five, chief engineer of a railroad at the age of twenty-six, and president of a railroad at the age of thirty-three—this was indeed a record of achievement worthy of admiration and praise.

* * * *

This account would be far from complete, however, without reference to Mahone's personal and family relations during the years when he was engaged in the location and construction of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. On February 8, 1855, he was married to Otelia Butler,[115] a lady of rare beauty and characterized by a strong and forceful personality. She was the only child of Dr. Robert Butler and his wife, Otelia Voinard.[116]

20:7427

113. Francis Newton Thorpe, *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and other organic laws of the states, territories, and colonies now or heretofore forming the United States of America,* Washington, 1909, 7 vols., VII, 3819-3852.

114 Joseph Johnson, in his first message to the Legislature after taking the oath as governor, "urged the extension of the Central Railway from its western terminus at Staunton to the Ohio. He also wished the James River and Kanawha Canal extended westward from Buchanan to Clifton Forge, there making a physical connection with the railway. Both recommendations were adopted." William Henry Tappey Squires, *The Land of Decision,* Portsmouth, Virginia, 1931, p. 282. At the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1850-1851 Henry A. Wise had spoken strongly in favor of a comprehensive system of internal improvement which would bind together more closely the various sections of the State. Supplement, *Richmond Enquirer,* March 13, 1851.

115 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

116 Doctor Butler had formerly been married to Eliza Bracken, the daughter of Rev. John Bracken, Rector of Bruton Parish Church at Williamsburg, Virginia, and

Robert Butler was born in the County of King and Queen, in August, 1784.[117] His father was Reuben Butler, and Robert was one of seven sons.[118] He attended school at Washington College and at the College of William and Mary, afterwards studying medicine for a time in the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania.[119] Subsequently he settled in Smithfield, where he was a practicing physician for many years.[120]

Like the cultured Virginians of his day Doctor Butler took an active part in both state and federal politics. He was a pronounced Democrat, being both a confidential friend and political adviser of Thomas Ritchie, the champion of democracy in Virginia, and also a staunch supporter of Andrew Jackson.[121] In 1850, when his accumulating years had somewhat impaired his efficiency for the practice of medicine he was induced to offer himself for the office of Treasurer of the Commonwealth. By a joint vote of the General Assembly of Virginia on February 12, 1850, he was elected to this important position.[122] He served faithfully in this capacity until his death on July 21, 1853. Due to "the official as well as the private character and exalted worth of the deceased" the Governor of Virginia directed that the governmental offices in the Capitol should be closed for the day in respect to his memory.[123]

Doctor Butler's wife, Otelia Voinard, was born in March, 1803.[124] She was a daughter of Joseph Voinard, a native of France.[125] It is pos-

Professor of Humanity at the College of William and Mary. *McGill Papers.* "Dr. Robert Butler, late Treasurer of Virginia." This brief biographical sketch of Dr. Butler was written by S. Bassett French, a friend of William Mahone, under date of Feb. 19, 1886.

117 Doctor Butler was buried in the yard of an old colonial church, now St. Luke's Church, near Smithfield, Virginia. The tombstone records that he was born in August, 1784, and died on July 21, 1853.

118 *McGill Papers.* "Dr. Robert Butler, late Treasurer of Virginia."

119 *Ibid.*

120 *Ibid.*

121 *Ibid.*

122 *Ibid.*

123 The executive order, dated July 22, 1853, and signed by Governor Joseph Johnson, read, "The Governor having received the painful intelligence of the sudden death in this city of Robert Butler, late Treasurer of the Commonwealth, who had been repeatedly and deservedly honored by the General Assembly in appointing him to the responsible post he lately held; and deeming it due to the official as well as the private character and exalted worth of the deceased, that every mark of respect should be paid to his memory, hereby directs that the several offices of the government in the Capitol forthwith close their respective offices during this day." *Ibid.*

124 Otelia Voinard is buried beside her husband, Dr. Butler, in the yard of St. Luke's Church, near Smithfield. The marble slab here records that she was born in March, 1803, and died on August 11, 1855.

125 *McGill Papers.* "Dr. Robert Butler, late Treasurer of Virginia."

sible that Voinard was one of the French soldiers who fought under Lafayette in the American Revolution.[126] In any event, he migrated to America prior to 1795 and settled in Petersburg where he established a large export tobacco business.[127] His daughter, Otelia Voinard, was noted for her charm and beauty. She survived her husband's death two years, dying on August 11, 1855, the same year that her daughter, Otelia Butler, married William Mahone.

After their marriage in Richmond,[128] Mahone and his wife settled in Norfolk where his chief office was located. During the latter part of the year they moved to Jerusalem while the plague of yellow fever was raging in Norfolk.[129] They stayed at the home of Mahone's mother, his father having died earlier in the year, on March 15, 1855.[130] Here it was that their first child was born.[131] They returned to Norfolk after the epidemic had subsided and were residing there at the outbreak of the War Between the States.

126 Conversations with William L. McGill, Petersburg, Virginia.

127 *McGill Papers.* "Dr. Robert Butler, late Treasurer of Virginia."

128 It is probable that William Mahone and Otelia Butler were married in Richmond, but the marriage bonds cannot be located at the present time.

129 Conversations with Lucius L. Manry.

130 After the death of her husband, Mrs. Fielding Jordan Mahone lived on a farm which her husband had purchased near Jerusalem. She survived the trying period of the Civil War, dying on October 9, 1868, at the age of 64. *Manry Papers.* "Mahone Genealogy."

131 William Mahone and his wife, Otelia Butler, were the parents of thirteen children. Only three of the children reached maturity, these being William, named for his father, Robert Butler, named for his maternal grandfather, and Otelia, named for her mother and grandmother. *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

CHAPTER III: THE SOLDIER

"I often thought if a stray ball should carry me off who could best command the incomparable Infantry of the Army of Northern Virginia. Of course, I could not nominate a successor—that whole matter was in the hands of the President. But, among the younger men, I thought William Mahone had developed the highest qualities for organization and command."—The words of General Robert E. Lee, quoted from a letter of Major J. Horace Lacy to General Mahone, March 10, 1889.

NOT until February 4, 1861, were delegates elected in Virginia to a State Convention to decide upon the question of secession. For several reasons Virginia was more opposed to secession than her sister states of the South,[1] and a majority of the delegates to the convention were elected as Union men.[2] The convention assembled in Richmond on February 13, and continued its deliberations until May 1.[3] The firing on Fort Sumter on April 12 impressed the delegates with the gravity of the situation, and Lincoln's call for troops from Virginia on April 15 necessitated prompt action on the question of secession.[4] When the Ordinance of Secession was presented by William Ballard Preston on April 17, it was passed by a vote of 88 to 55.[5]

William Mahone was an ardent secessionist and was present in Richmond on the day when the Ordinance of Secession was passed.[6] John Letcher, Governor of Virginia, immediately summoned Mahone and ordered him to proceed to Norfolk and with the volunteer companies of Petersburg, Norfolk and Portsmouth, to seize the Gosport Navy

1 Among these reasons may be mentioned Virginia's geographical proximity to the northern States, her economic relationships with Maryland and the North, and her historical contribution to the founding and development of the Union. In the extreme northwestern part of the State the Union feeling was particularly strong.

2 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 43.

3 For a report of the deliberations of the convention see the Richmond *Enquirer* during this period.

4 John Herbert Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* New York and Washington, 1904, p. 174.

5 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* pp. 54, 55. When the action of the convention was referred to the people of Virginia it was overwhelmingly ratified in the eastern part of the State but strongly opposed by certain sections in the west. This lack of unity was later reflected in the disruption of Virginia and the formation of West Virginia as a separate State. James Clyde McGregor, *The Disruption of Virginia,* New York, 1922, pp. 180, 181.

6 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone." *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 5, Dunbar Rowland, Editor, *Jefferson Davis, Con-*

Yard.[7] However, William B. Taliaferro, the Senior Major General of the State Militia, insisted upon the appointment, and through the influence of ex-Governor Wise was able to secure it.[8] That night, April 18, Mahone took General Taliaferro and his improvised staff from Petersburg to Norfolk by special train. Headquarters were established at the Atlantic Hotel and General Taliaferro, assisted by Mahone, set about to restore confidence and to reorganize the Virginia troops in this section.[9]

Mahone played an interesting part in connection with the surrender of the Gosport Navy Yard. On July 20 the United States gunboat *Pawnee* passed up to the Navy Yard which was in the possession of United States troops.[10] That evening General Taliaferro appointed a committee composed of General George Blow, Lieutenant George T. Sinclair and William Mahone to demand its surrender.[11] Mahone realized the folly of a demand which could not be enforced but the committee proceeded to execute its trust. The demand to surrender was delivered in a firm and dignified voice, but was promptly and sternly refused.[12] The committee thereupon saluted and departed.

While the committee was making its report to General Taliaferro word was received that a small convoy of boats had left the Navy Yard and was proceeding up the South Branch of the Elizabeth River, presumably with the intention of destroying the railroad bridge over that river.[13] Mahone appreciated the seriousness of the situation since this bridge was used by the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad, the only line running out of Norfolk. Upon his urgent insistence, General Taliaferro ordered a volunteer company to report to Mahone to proceed to the defense of the bridge. Shortly afterward Captain Vickery's company reported at the railroad depot where Mahone was awaiting its arrival with an engine and flat car. Vickery, however, declined to proceed further, whereupon Mahone and Henry Fink, his master of transportation, determined to go ahead without the aid of the company.[14]

stitutionalist, his letters, papers and speeches, Jackson, Mississippi, 1923, 10 vols., VII, 182, 183, 188, 190, 191, 193.

7 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

8 *Ibid.* Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* p. 190.

9 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 45.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

Heavily armed they boarded the engine and quickly proceeded to the bridge. When no naval force appeared on the river Mahone continued the run as far as the Dismal Swamp. The way was clear and everything quiet.

On the return trip to Norfolk Mahone executed his first piece of strategy in the service of the Confederacy. He ordered the engineer to blow the whistle and ring the bells of the locomotive in such a manner as to give the impression that several trains were approaching the city.[15] This artifice was continued for the greater portion of the night. At the same time Mahone kept messengers reporting to Commodore Macauley, then in charge of the Navy Yard, that "large bodies of troops from Georgia and South Carolina were arriving over the road, whose duty it would be to take the Navy Yard by assault if it was not abandoned."[16]

The expedient succeeded exactly as planned.[17] It was commonly known that General Beauregard had won a victory at Charleston, South Carolina, and he was hourly expected by the people of Norfolk to reënforce that city. Doubtless the Federal forces in the Navy Yard were apprehensive of this and Mahone's strategic maneuver on the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad and his employment of messengers to the Navy Yard convinced them of the arrival of reënforcements from the South.[18] In any event, the Federal forces abandoned the Gosport Navy Yard on the night of April 20, and at daybreak of the following morning the *Cumberland* and *Pawnee* steamed down to Fortress Monroe. The Federal forces destroyed a great deal of property at the Navy Yard and set fire to the wooden buildings, but their attempt to blow up the dry dock failed. The Gosport Navy Yard with considerable war material fell into the hands of the Virginia troops.[19]

On April 23 Major General Walter Gwynn succeeded General Taliaferro at Norfolk.[20] He took command of the State forces there, and immediately appointed a large staff of colonels. Mahone was summoned to Richmond by the Governor and put in charge of the Quarter-

15 *Ibid. Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 5. Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* p. 193.

16 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 5.

17 "This maneuver of Mahone showed the instinct of the soldier, into which he developed as soon as opportunity offered—and opportunities were many before the war was over." Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* p. 193.

18 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

19 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* pp. 45, 46.

20 *Ibid.,* p. 46.

master's Department in conjunction with Major Ben Ficklin.[21] He continued this work for about a month,[22] receiving, quartering, and equipping troops as they rolled into the State capital. Then he tendered his resignation to the Governor, declaring that he preferred to participate in active field service.[23]

On April 29, 1861, Mahone was recommended by the Governor for a commission as lieutenant colonel in the volunteer service of the State.[24] He received an appointment as lieutenant colonel of Infantry and was ordered to Burwell's Bay.[25] Before his departure, however, he was elevated to the rank of colonel on May 2,[26] which commission he held for six months.[27] At this time General Gwynn was busy at Norfolk organizing the numerous volunteer companies into regiments and Mahone was assigned to the command of the 6th Virginia Infantry.[28] Thomas J. Corprew assisted him as lieutenant colonel and W. T. Lundy as major.[29] He appointed Richard C. Taylor as adjutant and Alexander Tunstall as sergeant major.[30] Mahone had certain companies of the regiment stationed at the Intrenched Camp to the east of Norfolk while others were placed at salient points in defense of the city.[31]

Early in October, 1861, Mahone, still with the rank of colonel, was in command of the Second Brigade, under Major General Benjamin

21 *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone to Colonel Charles C. Jones, Junior, New York City, July 15, 1871.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

24 *The War of the Rebellion: A compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.* (Hereinafter referred to as O. R.) Published under the direction of the . . . Secretary of War . . . Washington, 1880-1901, 70 vols., in 128. Series I, Vol. 51, Part 2, p. 52. The best collection of newspaper articles referring to Mahone's military career is found in the Scrap Book compiled by Mrs. William Mahone in the *McGill Papers.*

25 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone." See *Confederate Military History,* a library of Confederate States History, in twelve volumes, written by distinguished men of the South, and edited by General Clement A. Evans of Georgia. Atlanta, Georgia, 1899. Vol. III, dealing with Virginia, was written by Major Jed. Hotchkiss. For a map showing the location of the battlefields of Virginia, see III, 572.

26 *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone to Colonel Charles C. Jones, Junior, New York City, July 15, 1871. The commission as colonel is found in the *McGill Papers.*

27 *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 51, Part 2, p. 123; Series IV, Vol. 1, p. 630.

28 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

29 *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 51, Part 2, p. 165.

30 *V. M. I. Papers.* "Biographical Sketch of General William Mahone."

31 *Ibid.*

Huger at Norfolk.[32] Writing to General Huger from the Intrenched Camp on October 2, he said:

> Yesterday I made a more minute reconnaissance of the country in the immediate vicinity of Sewell's Point, and determined upon advantageous locations for all the several forces at present designed for the support of that position. . . . I shall visit Sewell's Point tomorrow, in company with the Governor of Virginia, and will see you on Tuesday or Wednesday.[33]

On November 16 Mahone was commissioned a brigadier general,[34] in which capacity he had been serving for a number of weeks. He was assigned to the Second Brigade with headquarters at Norfolk. His field of activity was "the country seat of the Elizabeth River (South Branch), and extending southeast of the Dismal Swamp, in Virginia and North Carolina."[35] This was a section of the State with which Mahone was thoroughly acquainted and in which he was personally interested. For a while, no doubt, he was able to maintain many of his personal and business contacts in Norfolk, particularly in connection with the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. However, as his military responsibilities increased with the exigencies of war many of these relationships were abandoned, and on May 1, 1862, Mahone was instructed to order his superintendent to take charge of the transportation on the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad.[36]

Early in May, 1862, with the evacuation of Norfolk by the Confederate forces, Mahone was ordered to move his brigade from Norfolk to Gordonsville, and to report for duty to Major General R. S. Ewell.[37] Before the removal was completed, however, General Robert E. Lee sent an urgent dispatch to Major General Huger ordering "General Mahone, with his brigade, or part of it, to Drewry's Bluff."[38] According to George W. Randolph, Secretary of War, Mahone was to "assume the command on his arrival there" and "to superintend the engineering

32 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 4, p. 665. Benjamin Huger had succeeded Walter Gwynn as major general at Norfolk.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Confederate Military History*, III, 634. The Commission as brigadier general is found in the *McGill Papers*.

35 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 9, pp. 38, 163.

36 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 485. It has been suggested that during the war President Jefferson Davis tendered to Mahone "the control of every railroad in the Confederacy." *Mahone Collection*. Manuscripts, F. Lewis Marshall, Alexandria, Virginia, to William Mahone, Nov. 25, 1869. A letter from President Davis to Major General G. W. Smith, Army of the Potomac, on Oct. 10, 1861, indicates that Davis may have had such a plan in mind. Rowland, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist*, V, 138, 139.

37 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 502; Series I, Vol. 12, Part 3, p. 883.

38 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 514.

operations and to cover the battery with his brigade."[39] On May 15, 1862, General Lee wrote Mahone as follows:

> Orders were issued on yesterday for your command to move to the south side of James River, in the vicinity of Drewry's Bluff. It is desired that you at once take charge of the river defenses at that point, and make such use of your troops and resources as may be best calculated to prevent the ascent of the river by the gunboats of the enemy. The work of obstructing the river should be prosecuted with ceaseless vigor and the batteries pushed forward to completion with all possible dispatch.[40]

During the next few days Mahone's brigade was busily engaged in constructing batteries at Drewry's Bluff and Chaffin's Bluff and in strengthening the obstructions on the James River.[41] About this time Captain Lee of the Confederate States Navy was sent to relieve Captain Farrand in the naval defenses along the James. His instructions from S. R. Mallory, Secretary of the Navy, seemed to conflict with the authority which had been intrusted to Mahone.[42] Far from satisfied with the state of affairs Mahone wrote to Randolph, Secretary of War, on May 25, 1862: "It is important to harmonize the operations of the Navy and Army I well understand, and so far as in my power this shall be done where no sacrifice to the service is to be the cost, but I cannot be responsible in any co-partnership authority."[43] Mahone asked for a definite understanding as to the extent of his authority, concluding with the statement, "I simply desire to exercise authority where I am held to account."[44]

On May 31 and June 1, Mahone's brigade took part in the Battle of Seven Pines, on the Williamsburg Road, about seven miles east of Richmond.[45] On this occasion, as was frequently the case, Mahone displayed a willingness to assume responsibility when he felt confident the situation justified it. Major General D. H. Hill's men were under the heavy fire of the enemy and an appeal was made to Mahone for assistance. Without awaiting a definite order Mahone immediately ordered his brigade to the relief of General Hill. The assistance of his brigade and the arrival of a Confederate battery were instrumental in the temporary repulse of the enemy on that occasion.[46]

39 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 515.
40 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 518.
41 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, pp. 519-522, 528, 534, 535.
42 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 7, pp. 800, 801.
43 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 544.
44 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 545.
45 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 1, pp. 945, 978.
46 *McGill Papers.* "Speech by William Hodges Mann at the Dedication of the Monu-

During the month of June Mahone's brigade was assigned to a position on the Charles City Road not far from Wright's brigade on the Williamsburg Road. The greater part of the month was spent in relative inactivity, but on June 25 the brigade took part in the engagement at French's Field. This was followed by the engagement at Oak Grove, the skirmish at Jordan's Ford, and the action at Brackett's. On July 1, 1862, occurred the bloody battle at Malvern Hill in which Mahone had a conspicuous part.[47] Major General J. Bankhead Magruder has left a colorful description of this battle, which reads in part:

> The fire of musketry and artillery now raged with terrific fury. The battle-field was enveloped in smoke, relieved only by flashes from the lines of the contending troops. Round shot and grape crashed through the woods, and shells of enormous size, which reached far beyond the headquarters of our gallant commander-in-chief, burst amid the artillery parked in the rear. Belgian missives and Minie balls lent their aid to this scene of surpassing grandeur and sublimity. Amid all our gallant troops in front pressed on to victory, now cheered by the rapid fire of friends on their left, as they had been encouraged in their advance by the gallant brigades on the right, commanded by Generals Wright and Mahone. . .
>
> Darkness had now set in and I thought of withdrawing the troops, but, as we had gathered many advantages, I concluded to let the battle subside and to occupy the field, which was done to within 100 yards of the enemy's guns. Pickets were accordingly established by Brigadier Generals Mahone and Wright, whose brigades slept on the battle-field in the advanced positions they had won. Armistead's brigade and a portion of Ransom's also occupied the battle-field. . . .
>
> I cannot speak too highly of the conduct of the officers and men of the brigades attacking in front: Brigader General William Mahone, commanding the Second Brigade, Virginia Volunteers; . . .[48]

During the summer of 1862, by a reorganization of the Army of Northern Virginia, Mahone was assigned to the First Brigade of Major General R. H. Anderson's Division, James Longstreet's corps.[49] His

ment to General William Mahone at the Crater, Petersburg, Virginia, July 30, 1927," pp. 4-7. William Hodges Mann, Governor of Virginia from 1910 to 1914, was present at the Battle of Seven Pines and an eye witness of this incident. This account, however, appears to be at variance with the official report of Major General D. H. Hill to Major General Longstreet in which the former states that "Mahone withdrew his brigade without any orders." *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 1, p. 945. This incident, cited by C. C. Pearson in his sketch of General Mahone, is probably the basis of a statement made by Douglas S. Freeman that "there was a feeling in the army that Mahone was a little too careful in looking after his men—a suspicion that he sometimes kept them out of fighting." *Dictionary of American Biography,* XII, 211. *Personal Papers.* Douglas S. Freeman, Richmond, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, April 15, 1933.

47 *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 11, Part 2, pp. 796-801.

48 *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 11, Part 2, pp. 670-672. At the Battle of Malvern Hill Mahone's brigade reported 39 killed, 166 wounded and 124 missing. *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 11, Part 2, p. 981.

49 *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, pp. 648-652; Series I, Vol. 12, Part 2, p. 546.

brigade was composed of the 6th, 12th, 16th, 41st and 49th regiments of Virginia volunteers.[50] Early in August the brigade was stationed in the vicinity of Rhea's Bluff along the James River.[51] On August 29 and 30 occurred the Second Battle of Manassas. In this engagement Mahone was severely wounded, his bravery evoking the praise of General Longstreet.[52] Due to this injury Mahone was unable to participate in the Maryland campaign in September when his brigade distinguished itself in its valorous defense of the South Mountain passes.[53] Not until the Battle of Fredericksburg in December was he able to resume command.

The Federal campaign at Fredericksburg extended from December 11 to 16, 1862. Here again Mahone was on familiar ground because of the surveys which he had made in this region as chief engineer of the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road Company. Mahone's brigade was placed in the rear of the line of battle but constantly had one or two regiments in advance of the batteries on the front which engaged in the fight.[54] The brigade busied itself in the erection of batteries and rifle pits until the Federal forces evacuated Fredericksburg and recrossed the Rappahannock River on December 16.[55] Concerning Mahone's part in the battle, Major General R. H. Anderson wrote to Major G. Moxley Sorrel on January 3, 1863:

> It is due to Brigadier-General Mahone to say that he discovered and pointed out the important position for a battery, which enfiladed the slope upon which the enemy formed his battalions before and after his attacks upon Marye's Hill, and that he rendered very efficient service, assisting in the construction of the battery which drove them from their place of shelter.[56]

50 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 651.

51 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 11, Part 3, p. 662.

52 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 19, Part 1, p. 842. In this battle Mahone's brigade reported 37 killed and 190 wounded. *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 12, Part 2, p. 561. An amusing story is told in connection with Mahone's injury at the Second Battle of Manassas. At the time of the battle Mrs. Mahone was serving as a nurse at Richmond. When Governor Letcher brought word to her of her husband's injury at Manassas she became very much alarmed. "Now don't be concerned," the governor said, in an effort to calm her fears, "after all, it's only a flesh wound." "Flesh wound!" Mrs. Mahone exclaimed. "It can't be a flesh wound; the General hasn't any flesh!" There was considerable truth in her statement for Mahone weighed only a hundred pounds at the time. Conversations with Mrs. Otelia Mahone McGill. Also *Personal Papers.* John Bassett Moore, New York City, to N. M. Blake, Jan. 16, 1934.

53 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 19, Part 1, pp. 146, 148, 810-812. At Maryland Heights Mahone's brigade was commanded by Colonel William A. Parham. *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 19, Part 1, pp. 818, 826.

54 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 21, pp. 614, 615.

55 In the battle Mahone's brigade reported 2 killed and 6 wounded. *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 21, pp. 559, 610.

56 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 21, p. 609.

After the Battle of Fredericksburg the Federal Army lay at Falmouth, north of the Rappahannock River, a short distance upstream from Fredericksburg. The Confederate Army lay south of the river in the vicinity of Fredericksburg. Mahone was in command of the left wing of Anderson's Division at the United States Ford, charged with the defense of that crossing of the Rappahannock.[57] It was at this time, March 30, 1863, that Major General Anderson recommended Mahone's promotion to the rank of major general in a letter to General S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector General, at Richmond:

> I have the honor to recommend Brigadier-General Wm. Mahone for promotion to the grade of Major-General. During the past eight months, except for a short period, when he was incapacitated by a wound, he has commanded a brigade of my division, and in that position has shown great skill and untiring activity, quick perception, energetic execution, and other qualities of a superior general officer. He has had the advantages of a military education, and is a thorough disciplinarian. He conducted his brigade into action at the second Manassas with conspicuous gallantry, and was wounded in that battle. His activity and skill were noticed in my report of the part taken by my division in the battle of Fredericksburg.[58]

The last of April and the first part of May, 1863, occurred the Battle of Chancellorsville and the engagements near Fredericksburg. General Hooker was in command of the Federal forces and General Lee in charge of the Confederate Army. On May 2 General Stonewall Jackson, by a famous flanking march, made an unexpected attack on Hooker's right, commanded by General Howard. The Federal troops quickly gave way, but on the same night General Jackson was fired upon and mortally wounded by his own men as he was reconnoitering in front of the battle lines. The untimely death of Jackson was an irretrievable loss both to General Lee and the cause of the Confederacy.[59] Certain evidences, however, indicate that in the trying months which followed General Mahone came more and more to occupy the place in Lee's regard which Jackson formerly held.[60]

57 *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 25, Part 1, pp. 795, 862; Series I, Vol. 25, Part 2, p. 669.

58 *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), pp. 3, 4. Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Colonel W. C. Elam," pp. 6, 7.

59 When Jackson was wounded Lee is reported to have said, "He has lost his left arm; but I have lost my right arm." Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 316.

60 Mahone "was one of Lee's most trusted Generals and when Jackson fell at Chancellorsville, he at once took that fallen hero's place in Lee's regard." *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), p. 3.

"Ere Jackson fell Mahone shone day by day,
A burnished lance amid that crop of spears, —
None rose above him in that grand array;

On April 29, 1863, Mahone's brigade, composed of the 6th, 12th, 16th, 41st and 61st Virginia regiments, had moved to an advantageous position on the turnpike about two miles from Chancellorsville in the direction of Fredericksburg.[61] The following day a portion of the Federal force was "vigorously repulsed by Mahone's brigade" as it was proceeding eastward from Chancellorsville.[62] The brigade also participated in the spirited fighting near Chancellorsville on May 1 and 2.[63] On May 3 it was ordered to Salem Church which was located on the plank road five miles from Fredericksburg. Here the brigade helped to repulse the forces of General Sedgwick who was attempting to come to the aid of Hooker.[64] In these various maneuvers General Anderson commended Mahone for "his bold, skillful, and successful management, so well seconded by his brave Virginians."[65]

For a month following the Battle of Chancellorsville the Federal forces remained north of the Rappahannock and the Confederate troops south of the river in the vicinity of Fredericksburg. Then Lee determined upon a second invasion of the North with the hope of drawing Grant's forces away from Vicksburg and to secure food and clothing for his army. Mahone's brigade, as a part of General Anderson's division, made the march from Fredericksburg to Gettysburg by way of Culpeper Court House, Berryville, Hagerstown and Chambersburg.[66] In the decisive battle of Gettysburg the brigade took no special or active part beyond that which fell to the lot of its line of skirmishers.[67] The battle was concluded on July 3, and on the following night Lee began his retreat to the south. In October, 1863, Mahone's brigade took part

> And Lee, who stood last of the Cavaliers,
> Knew he had found of War's stupendous trade,
> A Master at your head, Mahone's Brigade!"
>
> Quoted from Captain James Barron Hope's poem which was delivered at the second reunion of Mahone's Brigade in Norfolk, Virginia, July 31, 1876. *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Mahone's Brigade!" A metrical address by Captain James Barron Hope, p. 9.

61 *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 25, Part 1, pp. 514, 515, 780, 790.

62 *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 25, Part 1, p. 796.

63 *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 25, Part 1, p. 797. For a full account of the part played by Mahone's brigade in the Battle of Chancellorsville see George S. Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans,* Petersburg, Virginia, 1892, pp. 45-76.

64 *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 25, Part 1, p. 801. In the Battle of Chancellorsville Mahone's brigade reported 21 killed, 122 wounded and 217 missing. *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 25 Part 1, p. 854.

65 *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 25, Part 1, p. 853.

66 *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 27, Part 2, pp. 612-616.

67 A part of Mahone's brigade was employed in the support of Pegram's batteries at Gettysburg. The brigade reported 8 killed, 55 wounded and 39 missing. *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 27, Part 2, p. 621.

in a minor engagement at Bristoe Station, Virginia.[68] By December of that year it was again stationed near the Fredericksburg Plank Road.[69]

In May, 1863, Mahone had been elected to the Virginia State Senate[70] by the city of Norfolk to supply the vacancy in the representation from the second senatorial district occasioned by the resignation of William E. Taylor.[71] The Senate was in session from December 7, 1863, to March 10, 1864,[72] during which time a final message was delivered to the General Assembly by Governor John Letcher,[73] and a first message by his successor, Governor William Smith.[74] Because of the pressure of military duties Mahone did not take his seat in the Senate until March 1, 1864.[75] It appears, however, that he took an active part in the deliberations of that body during the closing days of the session.[76]

In the early spring of 1864 Ulysses S. Grant was appointed Lieutenant General of the Federal Army. He was in command of all the Federal forces but directed his attention chiefly to northern Virginia while General Sherman was operating in the southwest. The first part of May, Grant's forces were stationed north of the Rapidan River while Lee was in close proximity to the south. On May 3 and 4 the entire Federal Army crossed the Rapidan without hinderance. The Confederate forces were speedily concentrated, and on May 5 and 6 occurred the famous Battle of the Wilderness.[77]

Mahone's brigade had broken camp on May 4 and moved to a position near Willis's Ford on the Rapidan. On May 5 it joined the rest of the division facing the enemy in the Wilderness, and early in the morning of May 6 was ready for action. Concerning the participation of his brigade in the Battle of the Wilderness, Mahone reported as follows:

68 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 29, Part 1, pp. 428, 429.

69 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 29, Part 1, p. 843.

70 Richmond *Dispatch,* Oct. 9, 1895.

71 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia; begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond, on Monday, the seventh day of December, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three—being the eighty-seventh of the Commonwealth,* Richmond, 1863, p. 178.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 233.

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-30.

74 *Ibid.*, pp. 61-71.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 178.

76 *Ibid.*, pp. 178-232.

77 For detailed accounts of the Battle of the Wilderness and other famous battles of the War Between the States one should consult Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, Editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War . . . being for the most part contributions by Union and Confederate officers.* Based upon "The Century War Series." New York, 1887-88, 4 vols.

We were at once assigned a position in support of a part of the line of Lieutenant-General Longstreet's front, but very soon after were asked to join and co-operate with Anderson's and Wofford's brigades, of that corps, in an attack upon the enemy's left flank. As the senior-brigadier, I was by Lieutenant-General Longstreet charged with the immediate direction of this movement. Wofford and Anderson were already in motion, and in a few minutes the line of attack had been formed, and the three brigades, in imposing order and with a step that meant to conquer, were now rapidly descending upon the enemy's left. The movement was a success—complete as it was brilliant. The enemy were swept from our front on the plank road, where his advantages of position had already been felt by our line, and from which the necessity for his dislodgment had become a matter of much interest. Besides this valuable result the plank road had been gained and the enemy's lines bent back in much disorder; the way was open for greater fruits. His long lines of dead and wounded which lay in the wake of our swoop furnished evidence that he was not allowed time to change front, as well as of the execution of our fire.[78]

In this attack on the left flank of the enemy Mahone's brigade occupied the central position while Anderson's brigade was on the right and Wofford's on the left.[79] Concerning the assault General Longstreet reported, "The movement was a complete surprise and a perfect success. It was executed with rare zeal and intelligence. The enemy made but a short stand, and fell back, in utter rout with heavy loss, to a position about three-quarters of a mile from my front attack."[80] In an effort to follow up the success Longstreet was severely wounded by a flanking party of his own men.[81] As a result of his injury, by an order of May 7, 1864, Major General Anderson was temporarily relieved from duty with Hill's corps and assigned to the command of Longstreet's corps. At the same time, Mahone, with the rank of brigadier general, was temporarily assigned to the command of Major General Anderson's division.[82]

During the next few days Mahone commanded this division in the fierce engagements in the vicinity of Spotsylvania Court House.[83] On

78 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part 1, pp. 1090, 1091. In the Battle of the Wilderness Mahone's brigade reported 20 killed, 126 wounded, and 7 missing. *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part 1, p. 1091.

79 For a full account of the part played by Mahone's brigade in the Battle of the Wilderness see Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans*, pp. 87-106.

80 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part I, p. 1055.

81 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part 1, pp. 1055, 1062.

82 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part 2, p. 967.

83 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part 1, pp. 329, 1056; Series I, Vol. 36, Part 3, pp. 802-807; Series I, Vol. 51, Part 2, p. 930. Among these engagements were a successful attack upon General Hancock on May 10, and a severe repulse of a portion of General Warren's corps on the North Anna River. Evans, *Confederate Military History*, III, 635.

May 24 he was at Taylorsville. Here he easily repulsed the feeble attacks of the enemy and was able to drive three regiments across the river, capturing a stand of colors and several prisoners.[84] On June 1 he and General John C. Breckenridge were engaged in an effort to drive the Federals across the Totopotomoy River.[85] In the skirmishes along the front they succeeded in taking about 150 prisoners.[86]

Early in June, after the disheartening losses in the Battle of Cold Harbor, Grant moved his forces across the Chickahominy and James in the direction of Petersburg. His plans were to join forces with General Benjamin F. Butler and the Army of the James in the hope of capturing Petersburg, dividing Lee's Army, cutting off communications with the South, forcing the evacuation of Richmond, and speedily terminating the war. His early attacks were repulsed by the Confederates whose position was made more secure by the arrival of Lee's advance forces.[87] On June 19, 1864, began the celebrated siege of Petersburg[88] which was never entirely abandoned until the evacuation of that city on the night of April 2, 1865.[89] The lines of the Federal forces lay in a semi-circle to the east and south of Petersburg. A short distance from the city their intrenchments intersected the City Point Railroad, Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad, Weldon and Petersburg Railroad and the Jerusalem Plank Road.

In the fierce battles which were fought in defense of Petersburg Mahone stood forth like Mars at perihelion. On June 22, 1864, General Lee wrote to James A. Seddons, Secretary of War: "The enemy's infantry was attacked this afternoon on the west side of the Jerusalem plank road and driven from his first line of works to his second on that road by General Mahone with a part of his division. About 1,600 prisoners, 4 pieces of artillery, 8 stand of colors, and a large number of small arms were captured."[90] Again on June 24, General Lee wrote

84 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part 1, p. 1031; Series I, Vol. 36, Part 3, p. 827.

85 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 51, Part 2, p. 977.

86 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part 3, pp. 862, 863.

87 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 3, p. 758.

88 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia*, p. 338.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 255. Carter R. Bishop states that General Beauregard established his position outside of Petersburg about midnight, June 17, and that General Lee arrived with his forces on Saturday morning June 18, 1864. The evacuation of Petersburg, Bishop continues, was early in the morning of April 3, 1865. When the Federal forces left Fort Sedgwick and charged Rives Salient and Fort Mahone at daybreak they found them deserted. *Personal Papers.* Signed statement of Carter R. Bishop.

90 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 1, p. 750. For slightly different reports of the engagement see *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 1, p. 761; and Series I, Vol. 51, Part 2,

Secretary Seddons, "Yesterday the enemy made a demonstration with infantry upon the Weldon Railroad, but before he had done much damage was driven back by General Mahone with a portion of his command. About 600 prisoners and 28 commissioned officers were taken, most of them were captured by Perry's (Florida) brigade."[91] So energetic and persistent was Mahone in his efforts against the enemy that his commanding officer found it necessary to restrain his movements. On June 24 General A. P. Hill wrote, "Have stopped Mahone. Mahone's men have been without sleep now two nights."[92]

The brilliant and courageous leader, however, could not long remain inactive. On June 29 he was in command of Finegan's, Sanders', and Perry's brigades at the Battle of Reams' Station near the Weldon and Petersburg Railroad.[93] His infantry assisted the cavalry in its daring charge against the enemy when so many men and horses were captured and so much ammunition seized. That same night the brigades returned to Petersburg to guard the city.[94] During the succeeding days Mahone's division, composed of Weisiger's (formerly Mahone's), Harris's, Wilcox's, Finegan's and Wright's brigades, was stationed along the Weldon and Petersburg Railroad.[95] Frequent marches were made from Petersburg to Reams' Station to protect this portion of the railroad.[96] So swift and skillful were the movements of the division that the Federal forces were often at a loss to know the location of Mahone's troops.[97]

On July 14, 1864, Lieutenant General Longstreet addressed a letter to General S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector General, recommending the promotion of Brigadier General Mahone to the rank of major general.

pp. 1025, 1026. On July 9, 1864, General Lee wrote to Secretary Seddons, "I send to-day ten stands of colors captured by General Mahone on the 22nd ultimo." *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 51, Part 2, p. 1032.

91 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 2, p. 685.

92 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 51, Part 2, p. 1028.

93 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 2, p. 575.

94 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 2, pp. 517, 575. The story is related that the women of Petersburg had great confidence in the military ability of General Mahone and felt reasonably secure and at ease when he was in charge of the defense of the city. When another officer was in command they were likely to remark, "Better sleep with your dress on tonight because we may have to leave the city at any minute." Conversations with Mrs. William R. McKenney.

95 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 3, pp. 207-210, 226.

96 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 2, pp. 585, 620.

97 On July 12, 1864, Mahone's division was reported by Major General George G. Meade to Lieutenant General Grant as "on its way to Pennsylvania." *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 3, p. 179.

At the battle of the Wilderness, May 6, I directed an attack to be made on the enemy's left, by a portion of the troops of the corps under my command and the brigade of Brig. Gen. William Mahone, to whom as the senior officer of the flanking column was intrusted its immediate direction. The success of the movement met my fullest expectations, and for the distinguished skill and gallantry displayed in its execution, I respectfully recommend Brigadier-General Mahone for promotion to the rank of major-general. I desire to add that a painful wound received by me on the same day has delayed until now this recommendation, and although still unable to write I conceive it unjust to defer it longer, and beg the privilege of making it by my staff officer.[98]

This recommendation of General Longstreet, however, like that of Major General Anderson on March 30, 1863,[99] failed to secure for Mahone an immediate promotion to the rank of major general. This is particularly significant in view of the fact that Mahone had been serving as major general in command of Anderson's division since May 7, 1864.[100] Two possible explanations for this may be offered. Mahone, a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, lacked the prestige which training at West Point offered.[101] Again, his rapid rise in the army from lieutenant colonel to acting major general when only thirty-seven years of age led to considerable jealousy on the part of other officers.[102]

In July, 1864, the position of the inhabitants of Petersburg was most unenviable. A letter of John Tyler to Major General Sterling Price, Commanding District of Arkansas, written at Petersburg on July 9 gives an interesting description of the situation. Speaking of the Federal Army he asserted that

his batteries are so close in upon the town that his guns command it, and he has every day amused himself throwing shells along the streets leading to the railroad depots and traveled by our commissary and quartermaster's trains. Indeed,

98 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 3, p. 775.

99 *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), pp. 3, 4.

100 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 36, Part 2, p. 967.

101 Mahone had been trained at Virginia Military Institute, "the West Point of the South." Despite recommendations for promotion by General Hill and General Longstreet, "West Pointism-red tape kept him down as long as they could." *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), p. 3. In this connection the statement of Arthur E. Wilbourn, military officer and authority, is of interest. "As a graduate of both the V. M. I. and West Point, I believe that the so-called 'West Point tradition' is very much overworked by the public at large. It is my opinion that there is not and never has been any 'tradition' of this nature in the military service such as would affect seriously any deserving and competent officer. Therefore, I do not believe that this so-called 'West Point tradition' had anything whatever to do with any delays that may have occurred in the recognition of General Mahone's military abilities." *Personal Papers,* Arthur E. Wilbourn, Fredericksburg, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Aug. 5, 1933.

102 Evidences of this are seen at a later time in Mahone's controversies with Jubal A. Early, David A. Weisiger, and others.

he can batter down the place at any moment, and will doubtless finally do so, but this would not materially affect our military position. The inhabitants prefer that their homes should be destroyed sooner than surrendered, and have quite made up their minds to the result. I have never known a braver or more patriotic people. . . . Flour here is commanding in market $400 per barrel and everything else in proportion. Many in and out of Richmond must starve to death this coming winter.[103]

The courageous citizens of Petersburg were willing to endure the terrors and hardships of a siege and bombardment as long as the Confederate soldiers were able to hold in check the threatening advance of the enemy. Their fortifications were strategically placed and well adapted to such a siege. Major General Meade was cognizant of this when he wrote to Lieutenant General Grant on July 26, "It is not the numbers of the enemy which oppose our taking Petersburg; it is their artillery and their works which can be held by reduced numbers against direct assault."[104]

Such a situation united the Federal officers in a plan to "run a gallery from a ravine in the rear of the Union line to a point under Elliott's Salient, now universally known as the Crater, a strategic, strongly fortified fort in the Confederate defenses east of Petersburg, and explode a mine which would demolish the position, create a breach in the line and enable an attacking party to enter Petersburg."[105] The plan for a tunnel was submitted by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Pleasants, a distinguished mining engineer in charge of the Forty-Eighth Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers, and work was commenced on June 25, 1864.[106] Many difficulties were encountered in the operation but by July 17 the main gallery, 510 feet in length, was completed. It was four and a half feet wide and five feet in height and timbered throughout. Its average depth was twenty five feet below the surface.[107] Under the Confederate position lateral tunnels were run to the right and left, thirty seven and thirty eight feet in length respectively, which curved forward making a three-forked gallery. Two mines of 4,000 pounds of powder were

103 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 3, pp. 758, 759.

104 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 3, p. 460.

105 *Personal Papers.* Pamphlet, "The Battle of the Crater," published by Arthur W. James, President of the Crater Battlefield Association, p. 1. This pamphlet is based upon careful historical research and is perhaps the clearest and most concise account of that spectacular engagement which has been written. For a map of the Battlefield of the Crater see Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans,* p. 320. An excellent map may also be found in the *Mahone Collection.*

106 James, "The Battle of the Crater," p. 1.

107 *Ibid.*

placed at the end of these laterals, and were tamped and ready to explode by July 27.[108]

In the meantime the Confederate forces had received information of the mining operations, and shafts were sunk in an effort to intercept the passage. Pleasants became aware of these counter-movements and was able to frustrate them by changing the direction of the main and lateral galleries and increasing their depth below the surface. The Confederate forces now began extensive preparations to meet the anticipated explosion. As early as July 4 they began to construct second line trenches behind the salient in a position commanding both the Confederate advanced positions and the Union works. In addition, batteries of artillery were placed on the ridge bordering the Jerusalem Plank Road from which the threatened point could easily be swept.[109]

During July both Lee and Grant moved a large part of their forces north of the Appomattox River, but on July 29 Grant brought fully 65,000 of his troops back across the river to be ready to support the *coup de main.* This movement was not paralleled by Lee who had only a relatively small Confederate force on hand for the defense of Petersburg.[110] The time set for the explosion of the Federal mine was 3:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 30. It did not occur, however, at the expected hour because the fuse had gone out half way down the gallery, due to bad splicing. It was relighted by two intrepid members of Pleasants' regiment and at 4:44 a.m., the mine exploded.[111] A Union officer wrote:

> It was a magnificent spectacle, and as the mass of earth went up into the air, carrying with it men, guns, carriages, and timbers, and spread out like an immense cloud as it reached its altitude, so close were the Union lines that the mass appeared as if it would descend immediately upon the troops awaiting to make the charge. This caused them to break and scatter to the rear, and about ten minutes were consumed in reforming them for the attack.[112]

The destruction to the Confederate forces was appalling. Four companies of Elliott's South Carolina infantry were annihilated, and Pegram's artillery was largely destroyed.[113] In the trenches to the right and left confusion reigned. Many were buried under a mass of descend-

108 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
109 *Ibid.*
110 *Ibid.*
111 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
112 This is the statement of Major W. H. Powell. Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans,* p. 167.
113 James, "The Battle of the Crater," p. 3.

ing dirt and munitions while others struggled to free themselves from the terrific heat and suffocating gas. If the Union advance had been made promptly it is likely that it would have met little opposition on the way to Petersburg. There was a delay, however, in the attack,[114] and during the brief interim Elliott was able to reorganize the remainder of his command and to rush up all possible men to meet the advance.

The Crater, according to Major General Bushrod R. Johnson's report, was 135 feet in length, 97 feet wide and 30 feet deep.[115] It was jagged and irregular in shape and the great clods of clay hanging precipitously over the edges made passage through the yawning chasm extremely difficult. As the Federal forces plunged into the tragic pit they were met by a withering fire from Elliott's rallied survivors who fired from the rim of the Crater. A deadly enfilading fire came from the Confederate trenches to the north and south of the Crater as additional Federal forces were rushed to the scene. More than 12,000 had crowded into the hole or were swarming the central sector when the Confederate batteries swept the hill-top with a barrage that cut down hundreds.[116]

Shortly after the explosion General Lee hurried across the Appomattox River to General Johnson's headquarters on the Jerusalem Plank Road from which there was an unobstructed view of the Crater.[117] He directed Mahone to send two of his brigades at once to the assistance of General Johnson who was in immediate command of that portion of the Confederate line which had been broken.[118] Instead of doing this, Mahone determined to take the two brigades himself and set out with his own brigade of Virginians, now commanded by David A. Weisiger, and A. R. Wright's brigade of Georgians.[119] He was thoroughly familiar with the entire terrain in this region,[120] and withdrew his troops

114 Probably at least thirty minutes elapsed between the time of the explosion and the Federal attack. *Ibid.*

115 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 1, p. 788.

116 James, "The Battle of the Crater," p. 3.

117 *Ibid.*

118 Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans*, p. 150.

119 *Ibid.*, p. 151. At this time Anderson's division, which Mahone was commanding, was composed of the brigades of General William Mahone (Virginians), General A. R. Wright (Georgians), General J. C. C. Saunders (Alabamians), General N. H. Harris (Mississippians), and General Joseph Finegan (Floridians). *Ibid.*, p. 150.

120 This was true both because of the surveys which Mahone had conducted as chief engineer of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad and also because of the recent military maneuvers in the neighborhood of Petersburg.

so skillfully that it was reported to the Union leaders that not a man had left the front.[121] The troops were brought by the northwest, east and north course to a ravine immediately behind the earthworks which the Confederates had constructed at the rear and to the right and left of the Crater.[122] As the men of Mahone's brigade passed by him through the covered way leading directly across the Jerusalem Plank Road he is said to have put his hand on the shoulder of each one and, calling him by name, to have reminded him that he was to fight for what men held most dear—their homes, their wives and their children.[123] When these troops were deployed and a certain degree of order established, Mahone addressed the officers to this effect:

> The enemy have our works. The line of men which we have here is the only barrier to the enemy's occupying Petersburg. There is nothing to resist his advance. Upon us devolves the duty of driving him from his strong position in our front, and reestablishing our lines. We must carry his position immediately by assaulting it. If we don't carry it by the first attack we will renew the assault as long as a man of us is left, or until the work is ours.[124]

Mahone's soldiers reposed no less confidence in their leader than he in his men. A member of his brigade who took part in the Battle of the Crater testifies that,

> Mahone, cool, courageous, and able, was by nature fitted for generalship as few men are, and none knew this better than the men of his command. Wherever he led or placed them, they always felt a moral certainty that they were being properly led or placed, either to inflict the most damage on the enemy or to have the enemy inflict the least damage on them. Accordingly, on the morning of the charge at the Crater, there was not a man in the brigade, knowing that General Mahone was present personally superintending and directing the movement, that did not feel that we were to be properly and skillfully handled, and would be put in just when and where the most effective service could be rendered.[125]

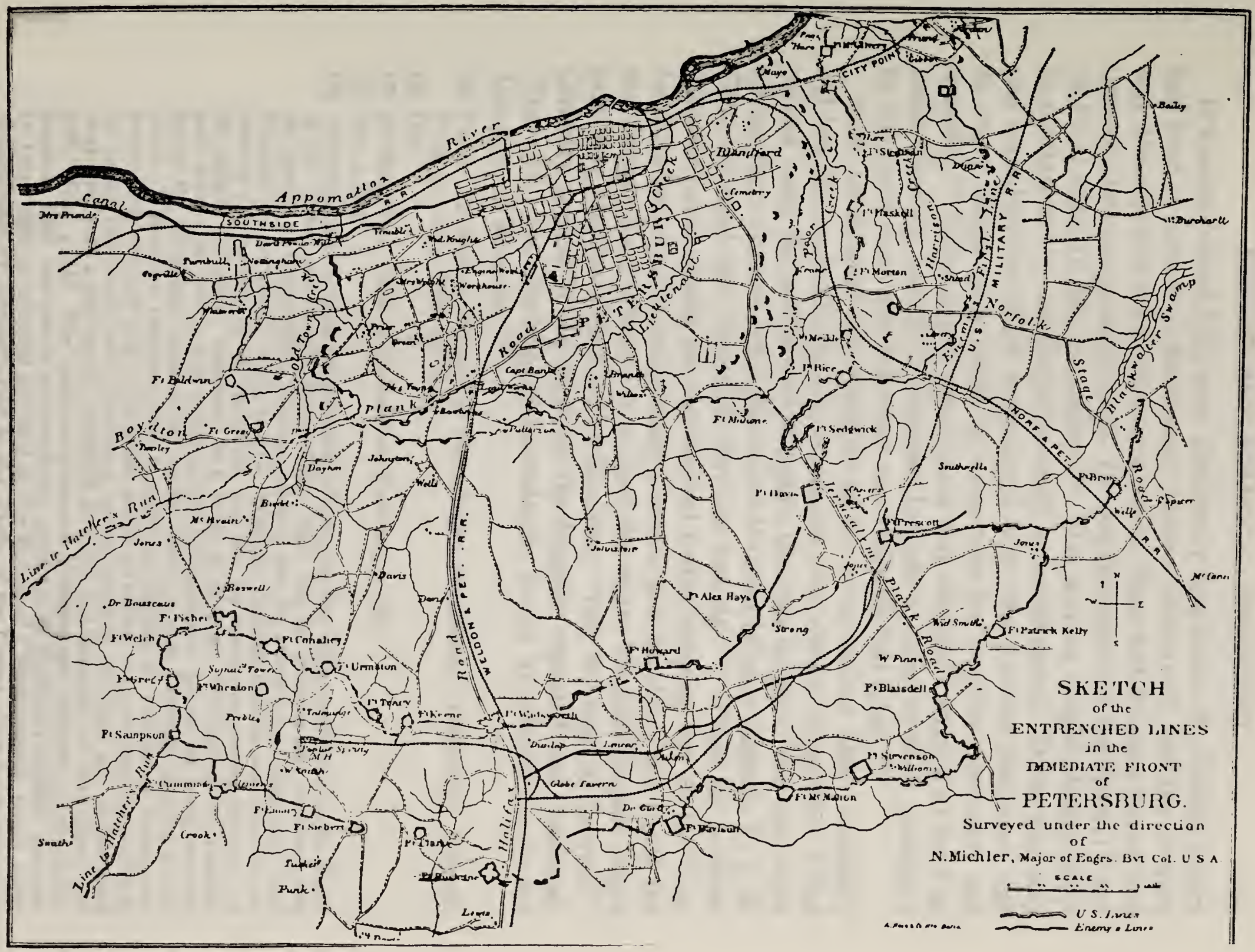
121 James, "The Battle of the Crater," p. 3.

122 *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

123 *McGill Papers.* "Speech by William Hodges Mann at the Dedication of the Monument to General William Mahone at the Crater, Petersburg, Virginia, July 30, 1927," p. 10. Another story is that Mahone sought to encourage and inspire his men by reminding them that General Lee was watching them. Carter R. Bishop in his "Story of Petersburg's Battlefields," Petersburg, Virginia, *Progress-Index,* September 14, 1930, tells a different story. He states that Mahone's soldiers who survived the battle have frequently told him that as they were passing Mahone, he slapped them on the shoulder, called them by their first name, and said, "Give 'em hell, boys."

124 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* pp. 234, 235. Quoted from a letter of Major Richard W. Jones to William Mahone, Jan. 3, 1877.

125 Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans,* p. 178. This is the statement of George S. Bernard who was a member of Company E, 12th Virginia Infantry, Mahone's Brigade. *Ibid.,* p. 149.


Appomattox River
Canal
A.R.R.
SOUTHSIDE
Mrs Friends
Turnbull
Nottingham
Fegrelle
Old Town Creek
Ft Baldwin
Boydton Plank Road
Ft Gregg
Peabley
Dayton
Johnston's
Wells
Jones
Boswell's
Dr Bouscaus
Ft Fisher
Ft Welch
Ft Gregg
Ft Wheaton
Ft Sampson
Cummings Point
Swaths
Crook
Line to Hatcher's Run
Ft Conahey
Ft Urmston
Signal Tower
Ft Sidbert
Ft Clark
Ft Buchanan
Lewis
Petersburg & Weldon R.R.
Ft Tracy
Ft Keene
Ft Whitworth
Dunlap
Lemon
Globe Tavern
Ft McMahon
Dr Curtis
Ft Morton
Ft Siebert
Halifax Road
Lieutenant Run
Capt Banks
Ft McIlvaine
Ft Sedgwick
Ft Davis
Ft Prescott
Ft Alex Hays
Strong
Ft Howard
Ft Blaisdell
Ft Stevenson
Williams
Ft Patrick Kelly
Wad Smith
W Pinn
Southerlin
Ft Brown
Jones
McCann
Bailey
Ft Haskell
Ft Morton
Ft Meade
Ft Rice
Ft McIlvaine
Harrison Creek
Taylor Creek
City Point
Mayo
Cemetery
Dupre
Shad
Norfolk
Stage Road
Blackwater Swamp
U.S. Military R.R.
Norfolk & Petersburg R.R.
Plank Road
Ft Burnham
Ft Stedman
Ft Haskell
Ft Morton
Ft Meade
Ft Rice
Ft McIlvaine
Ft Sedgwick
Ft Davis
Ft Prescott
Ft Alex Hays
Ft Howard
Ft Blaisdell
Ft Stevenson
Ft McMahon
Ft Siebert
Ft Clark
Ft Buchanan
Ft Conahey
Ft Urmston
Ft Tracy
Ft Keene
Ft Whitworth
Ft Welch
Ft Gregg
Ft Wheaton
Ft Sampson
Ft Fisher
Ft Baldwin
Ft Patrick Kelly
Ft Brown
Ft Burnham
Ft Stedman
Ft Haskell
Ft Morton
Ft Meade
Ft Rice
Ft McIlvaine
Ft Sedgwick
Ft Davis
Ft Prescott
Ft Alex Hays
Ft Howard
Ft Blaisdell
Ft Stevenson
Ft McMahon
Ft Siebert
Ft Clark
Ft Buchanan
Ft Conahey
Ft Urmston
Ft Tracy
Ft Keene
Ft Whitworth
Ft Welch
Ft Gregg
Ft Wheaton
Ft Sampson
Ft Fisher
Ft Baldwin
Ft Patrick Kelly
Ft Brown
Ft Burnham
Ft Stedman
SKETCH
of the
ENTRENCHED LINES
in the
IMMEDIATE FRONT
of
PETERSBURG.
Surveyed under the direction
of
N. Michler, Major of Engrs. Bvt Col. U S A.
SCALE
U.S. Lines
Enemy's Lines

It was now about 8:30 a.m. For nearly four hours the Federal forces had been in control of the Crater. From a little knoll near the covered way Mahone saw the Confederate works filled with Federal troops and counted eleven regimental flags. He quickly estimated the Federal force to be at least 10,000 in number.[126] This was an overwhelming force in contrast to the two brigades which he commanded. There was only one consideration which encouraged him—the positive assurance that so many troops in so small an area must be in great confusion and disorder.[127] Returning to the covered way Mahone hastened to send an order directing Saunder's Alabama brigade to come to their assistance by the same route that the other two brigades had taken.[128]

Now he directed his attention to the scene before him. Mahone's old brigade, with Weisiger in command, was already in position. Close behind came the soldiers of Wright's Georgia brigade. As they were taking their place to the right of the Virginia brigade Captain V. J. B. Girardey cried out, "General, they are coming!"[129] From his position Mahone could clearly see the Federal forces jumping out of the Confederate breastworks and coming forward in a desultory line ready for the charge. Raising his voice so that the entire Virginia brigade might hear him, Mahone called out to Girardey, "Tell Weisiger to forward." Girardey rushed to the front of the brigade, repeated the command, "Forward," and the brigade immediately began its advance under the direction of Weisiger.[130]

126 Carter R. Bishop's "Story of Petersburg's Battlefields," Petersburg, Virginia, *Progress-Index,* Sept. 14, 1930.

127 *Ibid.*

128 Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans,* p. 152.

129 *Ibid.,* p. 214.

130 The question as to what commanding officer gave the order to advance at the Battle of the Crater was bitterly disputed at a later date by Mahone and Weisiger and the friends of both parties. Mahone claimed that he called out to Girardey, "Tell Weisiger to forward." *Ibid.,* p. 214. Weisiger claimed that he was the first to observe the movements of the enemy and that he thereupon warned Girardey of the danger. Weisiger continues, in a letter to Mahone, "Perceiving the rapidity with which the enemy was forming, and the imminent danger of being overrun before the Georgians could arrive on the field, Captain Girardey assented to my views. I therefore requested him to state my reasons to you for so doing, and immediately charged with my brigade, which, in gallant style, carried the works as far as my line would cover, capturing several hundred prisoners and eleven stand of colors, with a loss to my command in killed and wounded of 283 officers and men." *Ibid.,* p. 217. The controversy between Weisiger and Mahone on this subject began in 1880, and was in all probability promoted by Mahone's political enemies. In June, 1880, an editorial appeared in the *Richmond Commonwealth* which spoke disparagingly of Mahone's part in the Battle of the Crater. The implication was heartily resented by Mahone and several men who had served in his brigade, and in August, 1880, a collection of letters appeared in the *Richmond Whig* which testified to Mahone's active participation on this occasion. In September, 1880,

Opposing the Confederate soldiers was the Fourth Division, composed of negro troops under the command of General Ferrero. Stumping along over the dead and dying in the Crater they had succeeded in gaining the open ground within the Confederate lines. And here it was that these half-drunken negroes, clamoring "no quarter," were met by the Virginia troops, many of them Petersburg boys, who were fighting for all they cherished as most dear and sacred.[131] Now occurred one of the bloodiest hand-to-hand engagements of the entire war and "the work of death by the bayonet and butt of the musket" continued until all of General Johnson's line was retaken to the left of the traverse.[132]

The Federal troops were still in possession of a portion of the line and the entire pit. After satisfying himself that the Virginia brigade could hold its advance position, Mahone made plans for a further attack against the enemy with Wright's Georgia brigade.[133] Two attacks were made by the brigade, one at about ten and the other at eleven, but each failed to accomplish its objective.[134] At one o'clock a third, and successful, charge was made by Saunder's Alabama brigade. The remainder of the line was captured and only the pit remained in the hands of the enemy.[135] Determined to complete the victory and desirous of arresting the death and suffering in the Crater Mahone now called for a hundred volunteers from Saunder's brigade to go into the pit. The response to this perilous undertaking was overwhelming, an attestation of the courage and loyalty of Saunder's men. Just at this juncture, however, a white handkerchief was raised in the pit and, at the Confederate re-

Weisiger's caustic answer to Mahone appeared in the columns of the *Richmond State*. *Ibid.*, pp. 217, 218. As a matter of fact "the weight of testimony seems to be that Captain Girardey gave the order" to charge on this occasion. *Ibid.*, p. 226. For his brilliant services on that day Girardey was promoted from a captain to a brigadier general, only to be mortally wounded a few days later. Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia*, p. 230. As for Weisiger and Mahone we are probably justified in concluding with Captain Drury A. Hinton that "Colonel Weisiger did all that the most gallant and experienced brigade commander could possibly have done and that General Mahone demonstrated, not only his ability to handle a division, but also his capacity to win a brilliant victory under the most adverse circumstances and in the face of tremendous odds." Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans*, p. 225. In the charge at the Crater Colonel Weisiger was wounded, and the brigade was turned over to Colonel George T. Rogers. *Ibid.*, p. 225. For his bravery on this occasion Weisiger was promoted to the rank of brigadier general. By an official order dated Nov. 3, 1864, he was assigned to the command of Mahone's (old) brigade in Mahone's division. *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 3, p. 1199.

131 James, "The Battle of the Crater," p. 4.

132 Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans*, p. 215.

133 *Ibid.*

134 *Ibid.*, pp.160, 162.

135 *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 216.

sponse, a large number of willing prisoners came crowding over the crest of the Crater.[136] Mahone was master of the scene![137]

Several factors made possible the Confederate victory at the Battle of the Crater. Their leadership was distinctly superior to that of the Federal Army on this occasion, and the organization and plan of attack more skillfully handled. The Confederate artillery and infantry united heartily in an effort where their coöperation was absolutely essential to victory.[138] The contribution of Elliott's brigade, Wright's brigade, and particularly Saunder's brigade, should be given full credit.[139] But that the Virginia brigade, directed by General Mahone and commanded by Weisiger, "did the substantial work that led to the re-capture of the Crater is a fact that will always stand out boldly on the pages of history."[140] Colonel William H. Stewart, commander of the 61st Regiment in the Virginia brigade, declares, "The whole movement was under his (Mahone's) immediate and personal direction and to him above all, save the brave men who bore the musket, belongs the honor and credit of recapturing the Confederate lines in front of Petersburg on the 30th of July, 1864."[141]

It is reported that General Lee, General Beauregard, Colonel Pegram and Captain Gordon McCabe were in the Gee House on the Jerusalem Plank Road when the Virginia brigade made its brilliant and victorious charge. When they saw the faded and bullet-pierced flags of the Confederacy flying on the recaptured intrenchments they got up, shook

136 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

137 Mahone's report of the Battle of the Crater showed 19 stand of colors captured by his division—15 by the Virginia brigade, 3 by Saunder's Alabama brigade, and 1 by Wright's Georgia brigade. *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 40, Part 1, p. 754. In connection with the Battle of the Crater one should read James Barron Hope's "Memorial Poem" which was read before the board of visitors, faculty and cadets of the Virginia Military Institute on July 4, 1870. In this stirring poem references are made to J. A. Elder's famous painting of the "Battle of the Crater" and also to Edward V. Valentine's marble bust of Mahone. Washington, D. C., Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 10.

138 Bernard, *War Talks of Confederate Veterans,* p. 229.

139 *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 178.

140 *Ibid.*, p. 178.

141 *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), p. 4. See also Evans, *Confederate Military History,* III, 635. That Mahone deserves credit for the Confederate success at the Battle of the Crater is clearly set forth in the following comment of Arthur E. Wilbourn, "If the crater battle had been a great Confederate disaster, it is improbable that any of Mahone's subordinates would have stepped forward to take the blame for it. Why should not credit for success be placed upon these same shoulders?" *Personal Papers,* Arthur E. Wilbourn, Fredericksburg, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Aug. 5, 1933.

hands with each other and left the house without a word.[142] Later in the day the rank of major general was conferred upon Mahone by General Lee on the field of battle.[143] On August 2 President Davis wrote to General Lee: "Have ordered the promotion of General Mahone to date from the day of his memorable service, 30th July."[144] The rank and honor of major general could no longer be denied one who had so justly earned the appellation, "The Hero of the Crater."[145]

It is difficult to determine the number of Federal and Confederate casualties in the Battle of the Crater.[146] Two days after the engagement General Grant reported a total of 4,400 men killed, wounded or missing, but later reports indicate that the number was even larger. Grant is reported to have declared that, "It was the saddest effort I have witnessed in the War."[147] The Confederate losses have been estimated at 1,500, or about one-third that of the enemy. A Confederate officer, referring to the Federal losses in the Crater, declared, "The slaughter was fearful. The dead were piled on each other. In one part of the fort I counted eight bodies deep."[148]

On Monday, August 1, two days after the hostilities had practically ceased, a truce was signed to permit the burial of the dead.[149] Midway between the lines a ditch more than 100 feet in length was dug in which 700 Union soldiers were buried. The Confederate dead were carried to the rear and buried in more permanent graves, many of them in nearby Blandford Cemetery.[150] During the short period of the truce the

142 *McGill Papers.* "Speech by William Hodges Mann at the Dedication of the Monument to General William Mahone at the Crater, Petersburg, Virginia, July 30, 1927," pp. 12, 13.

143 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 175. Evans, *Confederate Military History,* III, 635.

144 *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 42, Part 2, pp. 1156, 1157. Rowland, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist,* VI, 303. The commission of major general is found in the *McGill Papers.*

145 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 172. Lyon Gardiner Tyler, Editor, *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography,* New York, 1915, 5 vols., III, 73.

146 For early reports of the explosion of the mine and the casualties in the fighting which followed near the Crater see *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 40, Part 3, pp. 713, 818. For Bushrod R. Johnson's report of the Battle of Crater see *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 40, Part 1, pp. 787-793.

147 James, "The Battle of the Crater," p. 4.

148 *Ibid.* Confederate deserters reported that they had seen many battlefields, "but never saw so many dead men lying on the same space of ground as they saw there." They also stated that "most of them appeared to be killed by artillery, as they were horribly mangled." *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 42, Part 2, p. 5.

149 The cessation of hostilities was requested by the Union forces, and extended from 6 to 10 o'clock in the morning. *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 40, Part 1, p. 753.

150 James, "The Battle of the Crater," p. 4.

two armies fraternized along the Union burial place where there was a "narrow neutral ground between the lines of the sentinels."[151]

After the Battle of the Crater the Federal and Confederate forces returned to the intrenchments which they had occupied during the greater part of June and July. The siege of Petersburg continued but the Federal officers no longer entertained the hope of entering Petersburg and concluding the war in 1864. Mahone's division, the one formerly commanded by Major General Anderson, remained stationed in the vicinity of the Weldon and Petersburg Railroad and the Jerusalem Plank Road.[152] Apparently certain brigades of the division were occasionally moved north of the Appomattox River in the neighborhood of Drewry's Bluff.[153] There were sharp engagements from time to time such as that in the vicinity of Petersburg on August 19, 1864. On this date Lieutenant General A. P. Hill attacked the Federal forces "with the brigades of Davis and Walker, under Major-General Heth, the brigades of Colquitt, Clingman, and Mahone, under Major-General Mahone, and three batteries, under Colonel Pegram, and defeated him, capturing about 2,700 prisoners, including one brigadier-general."[154]

On October 27, 1864, another fierce assault was made against the enemy on the Boydton Plank Road near Petersburg. Mahone led the attack with three brigades while General Hampton supported the rear. In the struggle Mahone captured 400 prisoners, 3 stands of colors, and 6 pieces of artillery. In a subsequent attack made by the enemy "General Mahone broke three lines of battle, and during the night the enemy retired from the Boydton road, leaving his wounded and more than 250 dead on the field."[155] Again on the night of October 30 Mahone penetrated the enemy's picket line near Petersburg "and swept it for half a mile, capturing 230 officers and men, without the loss of a man."[156]

The Confederate forces, however, tasted defeat as well as victory, and some of their successes were attended by severe losses.[157] The discouragement of many southern soldiers was reflected in the large num-

151 *Ibid. O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 2, pp. 31, 32.

152 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 1, p. 66; Series I, Vol. 42, Part 2, pp. 85, 86, 359, 363, 368, 369, 474-477, 628, 630, 855.

153 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 2, pp. 210-213, 245, 246, 292, 297, 302, 304, 308, 310.

154 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 1, p. 940.

155 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 1, p. 853.

156 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 1, p. 854.

157 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 1, p. 507; Series I, Vol. 42, Part 2, pp. 292, 297, 302, 304, 308, 310, 628, 630; Series I, Vol. 42, Part 3, pp. 406, 424, 448, 472.

ber of desertions from day to day.[158] Soldiers were being conscripted in the South but even then it was difficult to muster a full fighting force.[159] General Lee felt that many of the desertions were due to "discomfort in the trenches." Others, he thought, were incited by "the circular issued by the Washington authorities, promising immunity to deserters and exemption from military service." He thought that steps should be taken to prevent soldiers from deserting the army, returning to their home states and enlisting again under officers more congenial to them for one reason or another.[160]

One of the most intimate pictures we have of Mahone during these trying days was drawn by his friend, Dr. John H. Claiborne, who says:

> And Mahone as he appeared in those last days! I rarely saw him during the war except at his quarters. He seemed to leave them seldom, except for some fight which he was pushing out on the right. Quiet, uncommunicative, absorbed in his own thoughts, taking care of his men; such a dyspeptic that he could not eat of the ordinary fare of the soldier, but keeping his cow and his hens, for which provision was made that they should be moved when he moved—but not interfering, as nothing interfered with the persistence and pertinacity with which he pursued his ends, viz: to find the Yankees and to drive or capture them. Whilst obedient to the commands of his superiors, he exercised a most liberal right of private judgment when he was sure of his facts.[161]

In November Mahone's division was busily engaged in the construction of winter quarters.[162] During the following months Lee's Army in this region suffered greatly from cold and a lack of provisions.[163] There were evidences here and there that discipline could no longer be rigidly enforced in the Confederate Army.[164] Mahone's division remained in its quarters near Petersburg during the entire winter with

158 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 2, p. 1175.

159 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 3, p. 583; Series IV, Vol. 3, p. 857.

160 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 2, p. 1175. On Jan. 21, 1865, the desertions from the Confederate Army in the neighborhood of Petersburg were reported to be "amazingly numerous." The chief cause for these desertions appeared to be the "insufficiency of rations." *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 2, p. 1144. Some soldiers, no doubt, deserted because of discouragement and homesickness. Others left because they feared for the comfort and safety of their relatives and friends who were endangered by the ravages of the war.

161 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* p. 248.

162 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 3, pp. 610-613.

163 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* pp. 250, 251.

164 In February, 1865, some Confederate informants reported to the Federal officers that on a certain occasion "the orders to charge were repeatedly refused, and that General Lee wept like a child." *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 2, p. 499. They also reported that Confederate deserters to the rear, when apprehended, "are returned to their commands without other punishment than a few days' confinement under guard." *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 2, p. 660.

Battle of the Crater, July 30, 1864
(From the painting by Elder)

only occasional movements southward against the enemy.[165] On February 6, 1865, Mahone led the division against the Federal forces near Dabney's Mills.[166] After a stubborn fight the enemy was driven back to his defenses on Hatcher's Run.[167]

During the latter part of February, 1865, the evacuation of Petersburg was rumored. It was also reported that Mahone's division had orders to move, but the destination was uncertain. It was thought that he might set out in the direction of North Carolina, but even more likely that he would move north of the Appomattox River.[168] The latter course was adopted, and in March Mahone's division moved to the Bermuda front, between the James and the Appomattox, to relieve General Pickett.[169] On April 1, the Union officer, Major General Hartsuff reported that Mahone's division, undiminished, was on the Bermuda front.[170] On April 2 there was an engagement between the troops of Hartsuff and Mahone in which Hartsuff reported seven killed, thirty nine wounded and thirty five captured.[171] It was on this date that Lee's Army, overwhelmed by the superior forces of the enemy, began the retreat from Petersburg and Richmond.[172]

General Lee's order of retreat specified that Mahone's division should proceed to Chesterfield Court House and then to Amelia Court House where the Confederate forces were to be concentrated.[173] On Monday morning, April 3, Mahone's division was at Chesterfield Court House[174] and on the following day arrived at Amelia Court House.[175] The Confederate forces then proceeded westward along the route of the South Side Railroad. On April 6 Mahone's division was at upper Sailor's Creek,[176] and on April 7 was intrenched in a strong position near Farmville.[177] An attack was made upon the division by the enemy but it was

165 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 3, pp. 659, 956, 1016; Series I, Vol. 46, Part 2, pp. 279, 280, 343. There are some indications that a part of Mahone's division was moved north of the Appomattox River to the Bermuda front in November, 1864. *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 42, Part 3, pp. 583, 598, 738.

166 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 51, Part 1, pp. 1203, 1204.

167 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 2, pp. 475, 477.

168 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 2, pp. 659-662.

169 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 2, p. 865; Series I, Vol. 46, Part 3, pp. 19, 31, 238.

170 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 3, p. 441.

171 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 3, pp. 497-500.

172 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia*, p. 255.

173 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 3, p. 1379.

174 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia*, p. 264.

175 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 3, p. 562.

176 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 1, pp. 1125, 1129.

177 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 3, pp. 620, 623, 624.

successfully repulsed.[178] Before April 9 the division had taken its place at Appomattox.

This final retreat to Appomattox has been eloquently described by one of Mahone's officers:

> Occupying the lines of Bermuda Hundred, between the Appomattox and the James, Mahone's Brigade was spared the sights of shame and horror that surrounded and filled the two devoted cities. . . . Gethsemane had come. . . . And so throughout that dreadful week the old Brigade held on its steady way. The roadside swarmed with drooping forms, the signs of ruin strewed the weary path; organizations melted away, and discipline gave way to license; dismay and panic seized on headless masses, whole corps were routed; whole divisions captured. High officers lost heart, and with it honor, and urged their troops to safety. The route grew fierce as the days went by, at last there was no army. But through it all—through hunger, weariness and hopelessness—through all the demoralizing evidences of defeat—in the face of the confident foe—this Brigade marched on as though the war were young, as firm as when it held the pass in Maryland, as self-reliant as when it rushed upon the flaming Crater, as ready to obey the words of Lee as though he still had ninety thousand men to do his will, and still a Jackson on the flank.[179]

On Sunday, April 9, 1865, General Lee, with only 7,892 organized infantry with arms, was faced by more than five times as many Federal troops at Appomattox.[180] Under the circumstances it seemed the part of wisdom to surrender without further delay.[181] Therefore, after consultation with General Grant, Lee "surrendered that portion of the Army of Northern Virginia which was on the field, with its arms, artillery, and wagon trains, the officers and men to be paroled, retaining their side-arms and private effects."[182] In the final conference before the surrender Mahone and Longstreet were among the officers with whom General Lee conferred.[183]

178 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 1, p. 723.

179 Duke University. *Cameron Papers.* Pamphlets, "Second Re-union of Mahone's Brigade, held on the Anniversary of the Battle of the Crater, in the Opera House, Norfolk, July 31, 1876." Norfolk, Virginia, 1876. Address of Colonel William E. Cameron, pp. 10, 11.

180 *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 1, pp. 1266, 1267.

181 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 1, pp. 1265-1267.

182 *Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. 46, Part 1, p. 1266.

183 *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), p. 5. A letter of General Longstreet to Colonel W. H. Stewart, dated Aug. 26, 1877, recalls this interview. *McGill Papers.* James Longstreet, Gainesville, Georgia, to William H. Stewart, Aug. 26, 1877. It would appear that during the last week of the war General Mahone's military responsibilities were increased even beyond those of a major general. As an indication of this on April 10, 1865, Colonel W. H. Taylor addressed Mahone as follows: "General Lee wishes you to make at once a short report of the operations of your command from the time of the recent attack of the enemy near Petersburg to the present. He desires you also to call upon the com-

Until the very last Mahone held his men together, always ready for attack or defense.[184] At Appomattox the division stood like a stone wall and broke ranks only at the command of Lee and Mahone. At the time of the surrender "Mahone's division was in better fighting trim and surrendered more muskets than any other division of Lee's army."[185] On April 9 General Lee had only 7,892 organized infantry at Appomattox. Nearly half of those who were actually present at the time of the surrender were in Mahone's five brigades,[186] which numbered 3,537 officers and men.[187]

Lee's surrender at Appomattox took place on Sunday morning. The first few days of the week were occupied with the paroling of officers and men and the discharge of necessary military duties.[188] By Friday morning Mahone's work was completed and he and a few friends set out on horseback to be reunited with their wives and families. That night the group stopped at Charlotte Court House, and early the next morning the journey was resumed.[189] About dark on Saturday evening the small party arrived at Clarksville, where they were given a warm reception by Mrs. Mahone.[190] Many changes had oc-

manders of the divisions which were assigned to you since the recent operations commenced—for reports embracing their operations between the time of the attack above referred to and their assignment to your command." *Ibid.*, Lieutenant Colonel W. H. Taylor to Major General William Mahone, April 10, 1865.

184 Regarding the retreat to Appomattox General Mahone reported to Colonel W. H. Taylor on April 11, 1865, "I am proud to know that during this most trying march, the circumstances of which precluded any rest or the supply of any regular ration—the Command never faltered in spirit or hesitated to perform with their time-honored boldness and alacrity every duty assigned it, and that in this sad hour of unavoidable misfortune its organization remains as it continued intact, and at the very moment when our trial had culminated in the necessity for the surrender of the Army—it was yet ready—well in hand—and earnest to deliver battle." *McGill Papers.* Report of Major General William Mahone to Lieutenant Colonel W. H. Taylor, April 11, 1865.

185 John Sargeant Wise, *The End of an Era,* Boston and New York, 1899, p. 428.

186 At this time Mahone's division was composed of Forney's (Alabama) brigade, commanded by Brigadier General William H. Forney; Weisiger's (Virginia) brigade, commanded by Brigadier General David A. Weisiger; Harris' (Mississippi) brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Nathaniel H. Harris; Sorrel's (Georgia) brigade, commanded by Colonel George E. Tayloe; and Finegan's (Florida) brigade, commanded by Colonel David Lang. *O. R.,* Series I, Vol. 46, Part 1, p. 1273.

187 *Ibid.,* Series I, Vol. 46, Part 1, p. 1278, Jennings Cropper Wise, *The Military History of the Virginia Military Institute from 1839 to 1865, with appendix, maps and illustrations,* Lynchburg, Va., 1915, p. 180.

188 In the *McGill Papers* are found copies of Grant's terms of surrender to Lee, April 10; Lee's instructions to his officers regarding the surrender, April 10; and Lee's farewell message to his officers and men, April 10, 1865.

189 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* pp. 301-303.

190 *Ibid.,* p. 303. During the siege of Petersburg Mrs. Mahone and her family were

curred in that short week but "the greatest marvel," according to Dr. J. H. Claiborne, "was seeing General Mahone sitting down in peace, playing with his children—the soldier whom one week before I had left at the head of his ragged veterans in fierce and hopeless fight."[191]

General Mahone possessed all the characteristics essential to a great military leader. He was a man of firmness, courage, ability and resourcefulness.[192] He was willing to assume responsibility when important decisions must be made.[193] He had complete confidence in himself and had the happy faculty of imparting confidence to others.[194] Under his leadership the Mahone brigade won lasting fame for its courage and daring.[195] Even under its subsequent leaders the brigade clung proudly to its name and survived the war in the Mahone Brigade Association.[196] As a major general, Mahone was able to inspire his division with a strong *esprit de corps* which kept the organization strongly unified until the final surrender at Appomattox.[197]

After the Confederate losses at Gettysburg in July, 1863, and the failure of the second invasion of the North, General Lee tendered his resignation to President Davis and recommended that a younger officer be appointed in his stead.[198] President Davis was able, however, to persuade Lee to remain in command and the matter was kept as quiet as possible. When it became known that Lee had offered his resigna-

tion there was great curiosity and speculation as to what person he had

residing in that city and found it possible to visit General Mahone from time to time. Prior to the evacuation of Petersburg, however, Mahone sent his family to seek refuge in Clarksville, Virginia, rightly surmising that they would not be disturbed there by the Federal forces. *Ibid.*, pp. 301, 302.

191 *Ibid.*, p. 303.

192 *McGill Papers.* "Speech by William Hodges Mann at the Dedication of the Monument to General William Mahone at the Crater, Petersburg, Virginia, July 30, 1927," pp. 2, 3.

193 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia,* pp. 248-250.

194 *Ibid.*, p. 265.

195 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* pp. 87, 88.

196 *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), p. 4. The first reunion of Mahone's brigade was held at Petersburg on May 10, 1875, and the Mahone Brigade Association was organized. The second annual reunion was held at Norfolk on July 31, 1876; and the third reunion met at Petersburg on July 30, 1877. *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, pp. 19-30. The second reunion of Mahone's brigade was a particularly notable occasion. General Mahone, President of the Mahone Brigade Association, presided over the meeting. A metrical address was delivered by Captain James Barron Hope, and the oration of the day was made by Colonel William E. Cameron. *Cameron Papers.* Pamphlets, "Second Re-union of Mahone's Brigade, held on the Anniversary of the Battle of the Crater, in the Opera House, Norfolk, July 31, 1876."

197 Evans, *Confederate Military History,* III, 635.

198 Wise, *Military History of the Virginia Military Institute,* pp. 180, 181.

suggested as his successor. In this connection General Benjamin F. Butler, a Federal officer, writes, "Of the fact that some younger general was recommended by Lee at the time of the resignation, I have undoubted authority," and he proceeds to affirm that "General William Mahone was the man recommended by Lee."[199]

In support of this amazing assertion General Butler cites a letter from Major J. Horace Lacy to General Mahone, written in the Hotel Chamberlin, McPherson Square, Washington, D. C., on March 10, 1889.[200] In this letter Major Lacy states that at the first commencement of Washington and Lee University[201] he was invited to address the alumni, and General Wade Hampton to address the literary societies. In connection with the exercises of the week General Lee, then president of the University, gave a formal dinner to about thirty gentlemen nearly all of whom had been officers of high rank in the recent war. During the course of the evening an officer from Georgia asked Lee if he did not think that General Gordon of Georgia had developed the highest qualities for command. With his usual quiet dignity Lee answered, "Where all did so well, certainly it would be invidious and improper for me to particularize. General Gordon was a brave and efficient soldier."[202]

Later in the evening, according to Major Lacy's letter, the conversation became more general and some one further down the table seemed to be telling a good story. General Hampton was seated on the right and Lacy on the left of Lee. Turning first to Hampton and then to Lacy, General Lee said, "Lean over, Major, I only wish Hampton and yourself to hear." General Lee then continued:

> General Hampton, in the dark days which preceded the fall of the Confederacy, for a good while, I was almost hopeless. And you know I did not spare this poor life, for I thought it became me to fall on one of those fields of glory. My artillery was handled well. The cavalry was in the very hands, after the death of Stuart, that I preferred to any other. But I often thought if a stray ball should carry me off who could best command the incomparable Infantry of the Army of Northern Virginia. Of course, I could not nominate a successor—

199 Benjamin Franklin Butler, *Autobiography and Personal Reminiscences of Major-General Benjamin F. Butler; Butler's Book,* Boston, 1892, p. 880.

200 A facsimile of this letter may be found in Butler, *Autobiography,* pp. 881-887. The full text of the letter may also be found in Wise, *Military History of the Virginia Military Institute,* pp. 181, 182, and in Bruce, *Virginia, Rebirth of the Old Dominion,* IV, 216, 217.

201 At this time the school was named Washington College. It was not until 1871, after the death of Robert E. Lee, that the name was changed to Washington and Lee University.

202 Butler, *Autobiography,* pp. 881-883.

that whole matter was in the hands of the President. But, among the younger men, I thought William Mahone had developed the highest qualities for organization and command.[203]

Concerning the authenticity of this letter and its contents there can be little question. Major Lacy, a man of high standing in Virginia[204] declared that it might be "an open letter to the world."[205] General Hampton, "the very soul of honor," lived for a number of years after the writing of the letter, and never denied the truth of it.[206] Its veracity, however, has by no means been unchallenged. It has been stoutly contradicted both by Mahone's political opponents[207] and by the West Point group in the Confederacy,[208] but little evidence has been presented in support of these contentions.

In addition to Lee's high regard for Mahone as a soldier it should be noted that the business and personal relations of the two men were of the most friendly sort.[209] When Lee visited Petersburg after the war he was entertained by Mahone,[210] and when writing an account of the War Between the States he consulted Mahone on various points.[211] Multitudes have united with Lee in praising Mahone's soldierly qualities.[212] A few years after the war one of his soldiers wrote, "If ever I

203 *Ibid.*, pp. 884-886.

204 Wise, *Military History of the Virginia Military Institute*, p. 182.

205 Lacy's letter to Mahone concludes, "The words were written down by me that evening, and are in my desk at Ellwood. I write them now hastily in a public room. But I know they are accurate. We drifted far apart, politically, and I so entirely condemned your policy and methods that I would not give them to the world. Now, I cheerfully write them, and, as far as I am concerned, this may be an open letter to the world." Butler, *Autobiography*, pp. 886, 887.

206 Wise, *Military History of the Virginia Military Institute*, pp. 182, 183.

207 Concerning Lee's recommendation of Mahone as a possible successor, Butler writes, "Since Mahone's change of politics in Virginia it has been most stoutly contradicted. It is but just to Mahone to say that at the time, he was ignorant both of Lee's resignation and of his recommendation." Butler, *Autobiography*, p. 880.

208 *Ibid.*, p. 888.

209 *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone to General R. E. Lee, July 21, 1868. *Ibid.*, Letter Books, Idem to Idem, Jan. 26, 1869.

210 Claiborne, *Seventy-Five Years in Old Virginia*, p. 258.

211 Writing to Mahone on July 24, 1865, General Lee said, "You are probably more intimately acquainted with the operations of Hill's Corps than any officer now living, especially with its services during the winter of '64-'65, having been most charged with the operations on our right. . . . It is my desire to write a history, if not prevented, of the Campaigns in Virginia from the beginning of the war to the close, that the truth may be known, but I desire to state nothing but the truth, hence my request to you for assistance. What can you give me." *McGill Papers.* R. E. Lee to William Mahone, July 24, 1865.

212 Few indeed have been the critics of Mahone's record as a soldier. Perhaps the most vituperative of all was General Jubal A. Early. An acrimonious correspond-

visit Virginia and should be in your region I will not deny myself the pleasure of calling on my old commander. Like thousands of other southern men I say, with pride, 'I once belonged to Mahone's Command.' "[213] Others are still living who testify as follows: "The writer often saw him (Mahone) during his services in the Army of Northern Virginia. He won the admiration of the Army for his dash and courage and soldierly qualities."[214] And to these statements may be added the careful judgment of the historian and scholar, "As a soldier, Mahone was admirable."[215]

ence took place between General Early and Mahone in 1871, as the outgrowth of a Military Memoir which appeared in the *New York Historical Magazine* in June, 1870. See J. Watts DePeyster, "A Military Memoir of William Mahone, Major-General in the Confederate Army," *New York Historical Magazine,* June, 1870, Morrisania, New York. It was written by a New York author, General J. Watts DePeyster, who secured much of his material first hand from Mahone. General Early felt that the article was a severe reflection on his military ability. As a result of this a caustic correspondence took place between Early and Mahone. Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "A Correspondence between Generals Early and Mahone in regard to a military memoir of the Latter," 1871.—In a letter dated May 30, 1871, Early wrote to Mahone, "I have before heard suspicions expressed that while operating about Petersburg, you were the trumpeter of your own fame, through the journals of that city, directly or indirectly. No man can now doubt your propensity for blowing your own horn, with the accompaniment of some very small whistles." *Ibid.,* p. 15. The letter continues, "In all my reading of biography, from Plutarch down, I have never read the memoir of any man of any age, in which he has been made to utter the tithe of so many illiberal things about his co[n]temporaries. In the whole Memoir, I have failed to discover a solitary expression of a kind or liberal word or sentiment in regard to any of your old comrades, from the Commanding General down, save and except General Jackson, under whom you never served, and along with the praise of him is the impudent pretense that his mantle had fallen on you. Great God! Stonewall Jackson and Billy Mahone! Hyperion to a satyr! I cannot pursue the subject further, and leave you alone in your glory." *Ibid.* Ten years later, on August 6, 1881, General Early wrote to Jefferson Davis, "Mahone is a miserable liar and slanderer, and what is more, he is a contemptible coward, and was so in the War. I had a correspondence with him several years ago about a biography of himself, which he caused to be written and published; and the next time I see you, I will show you that correspondence from which you will discover what a miserable creature he is." Rowland, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist,* IX, 9. Another severe critic of Mahone was David A. Weisiger. To a friend of his Weisiger asserted, "that he never saw Mahone under fire and that he never commanded the brigade in a single action." William Lawrence Royall, *Some Reminiscences,* New York and Washington, 1909, p. 79. A study of the criticisms of Early, Weisiger, and others, however, leads one to the conclusion arrived at by Henry B. Dawson, who wrote to Mahone, "It seems to me there must be some personal pique involved in the untiring minds of your opponents." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Henry B. Dawson, Morrisania, New York, to William Mahone, Feb. 1, 1872.

213 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, F. F. Fry, Steamship England, New York, to William Mahone, March 30, 1867.

214 *Personal Papers.* James Dinkins, New Orleans, Louisiana, to N. M. Blake, July 24, 1930.

215 Conversations with Dr. Arthur Kyle Davis, President of Southern College (Junior), Petersburg, Virginia.

CHAPTER IV: THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST

"Besides sharing in the gratification which all true Virginians feel over our great and hard-earned victory, there is a peculiar joy which pertains to *yourself* alone. It springs from the proud consciousness that you have done more to effect this splendid deliverance of the grand old Commonwealth than any other of her sons."—Quoted from a letter of W. W. Walker to Mahone, July 17, 1869.

WHILE Mahone was zealously engaged in defending the honor of Virginia and of the Confederacy on the field of battle, some significant and memorable changes were taking place in the Old Dominion. Perhaps the most important and far-reaching movement was that which resulted in the disruption of Virginia and the formation of West Virginia as a separate political entity. Sectional differences had long threatened the unity of the State,[1] but it was not until the Ordinance of Secession was passed by the Virginia Convention on April 17, 1861, that the people of the trans-Allegheny section definitely decided on separate action.[2] Anti-secession conventions assembled at Wheeling on May 11 and again on June 11, 1861. The second convention led to the organization of the "Restored Government of Virginia" with Francis Harrison Pierpont, of Marion County, as governor.[3]

When the General Assembly of the "Restored Government" met at Wheeling in the summer of 1861 it became increasingly evident that its members were in favor of complete alienation from Confederate Virginia. On August 29, 1861, an Act was passed which pro-

1 The best treatment of this subject is found in Charles Henry Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861,* Chicago, 1910. The chief differences of opinion in the eastern and western sections of the State centered around the questions of suffrage, representation, internal improvements, taxation and popular education. Slavery was the chief factor in these problems, for while many slaves were found on the large plantations of the Tidewater and Piedmont sections, very few were found on the small farms in the Valley and trans-Allegheny sections. These troublesome problems were faced by the Virginia Reform Convention of 1850-1851 and the solutions of this body were the most fair and equitable which had been reached up to that time. For a treatment of this convention see Nelson M. Blake, *The Virginia Reform Convention of 1850-1851,* Duke University, 1929. (Master's Thesis.) For the ultimate dismemberment of the State see McGregor, *Disruption of Virginia.*

2 Hamilton James Eckenrode, *The Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1904, p. 10.

3 *Ibid.,* pp. 10, 11.

vided for the formation of a new State and the election of delegates to frame a constitution for it.[4] Desiring to add the semblance of legality to this action the Legislature passed an Act on May 13, 1862, "giving the consent of Virginia to the formation of a new State out of her own territory."[5]

Now that West Virginia was prepared to enter upon an independent career the "Restored Government of Virginia" was no longer needed there. Governor Pierpont accordingly determined to move his government to Alexandria which now became the focal point of the Union administration in Virginia.[6] The Pierpont government was limited to a narrow strip of territory in the northern and eastern sections of Virginia which lay within the Federal lines. A large portion of the inhabitants in this region were adherents of the State government at Richmond and loyal to the cause of the Confederacy. Pierpont was able to maintain his government only because of the proximity of the Federal armies and the friendly recognition of the Federal government.

The Pierpont government maintained a precarious and somewhat impotent existence from the summer of 1863 to the spring of 1865.[7] Its work, however, was not entirely without significance. Under its direction a Constitutional Convention assembled in Alexandria in 1864 and framed a Constitution which superceded that of 1851.[8] Some of its most significant features were the abolition of slavery, the requiring of the test-oath on the part of all voters, and the disqualifying of all those who held civil or military offices under the Confederacy. Provision was made for education in primary and free schools, and also for equal and uniform taxation throughout the State.[9] These problems were characteristic of those which faced Virginia during the perplexing period of reconstruction, and in the Pierpont government we find a nucleus of the Republican party in Virginia.[10]

4 Provision was made that the new State "should take upon itself a just proportion of the debt of Virginia as it stood before the beginning of the war." *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 13. It was the "Restored Government of Virginia" and not the State Confederate Government that consented to the establishment of West Virginia. "This was merely the consent of West Virginia to her own establishment, and Virginia had no hand whatever in the matter." *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 19-22. For the complete text of these two constitutions see Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions*, VII, 3829-3871.

9 Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions*, VII, 3855, 3861.

10 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction*, p. 24.

On April 9, 1865, the war virtually came to a close with Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The night before the surrender General Lee discussed the situation at length with his generals. "Well," he is reported to have said, as the conversation came to a close, "it is ended, and forever. Slavery disappears never to be known again. The wise thing is to accommodate ourselves to the new order of things, and go home and *go to work.*"[11] This solemn declaration made a profound impression on Mahone who was a member of the group. He left Appomattox, he afterwards declared, with a determination to follow Lee's counsel with the same alacrity and tenacity that he "would have taken his judgment or obeyed an order of his upon the battle fields."[12]

No State suffered more than Virginia during the war. In the first place, she lost severely in land and resources by the action of the trans-Allegheny counties in organizing a separate and independent State. Furthermore, much of the territory she retained was subjected to the continued occupation of the Federal armies or the devastating raids of the enemy.[13] She was primarily an agricultural State, but many of her farms were left in a ruined condition, lacking both farming implements and stock. The emancipation of slaves increased the difficulty of the situation by creating an acute labor problem.[14] Such was the discouraging situation which faced the Virginia soldiers as they returned to their homes in the spring of 1865.

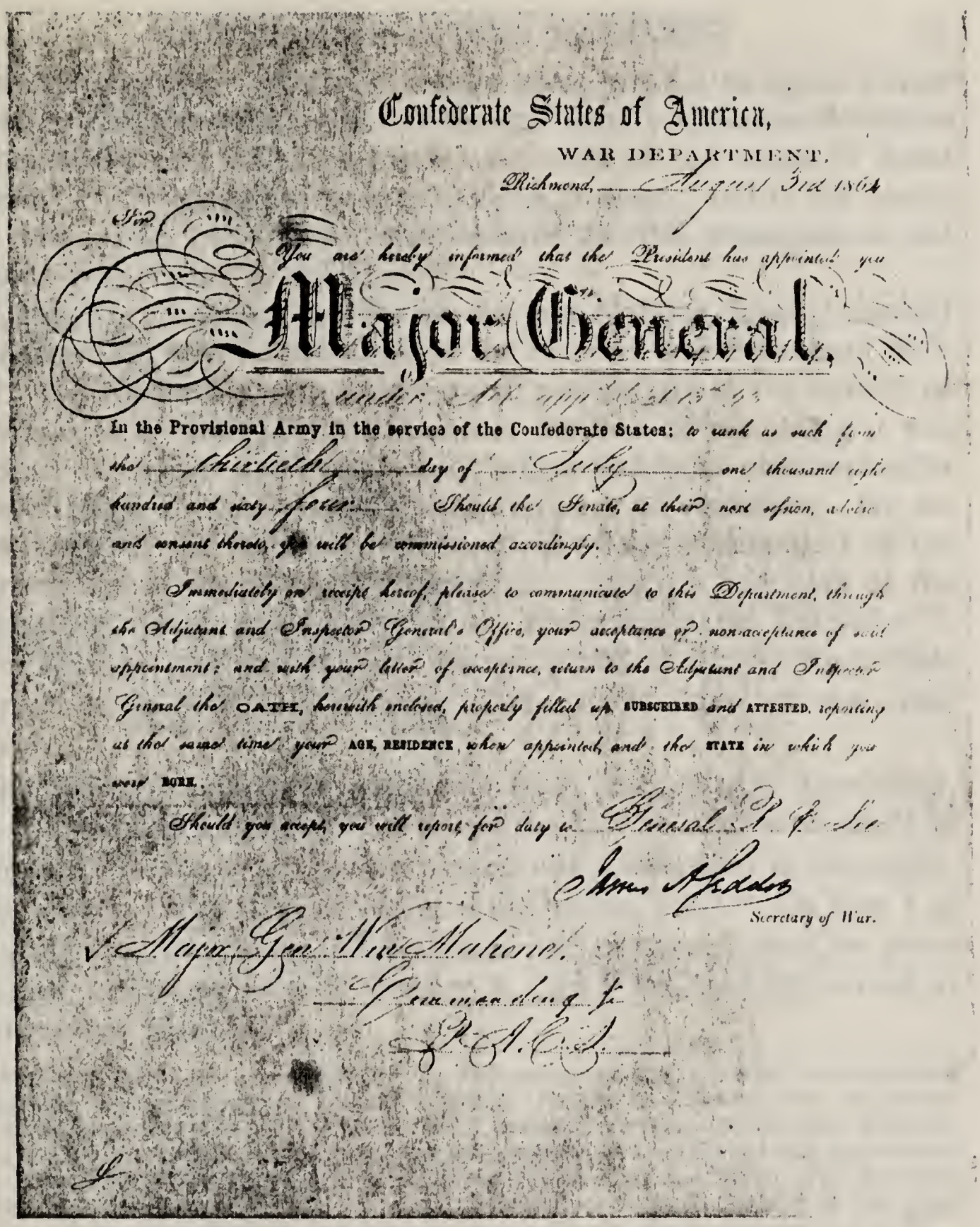
Mahone's first objective at the close of the war was to regain the presidency of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. The property of the railroad had been subjected to deterioration and destruction during the war, and like many other railroads in the State, was under the control of the United States government when hostilities came to an end. In spite of the discouraging outlook Mahone lost no time in returning to Norfolk to negotiate for his former position. Here he found many friends who loyally supported him. On the other hand, his opponents

11 *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, p. 53.

12 *Ibid.*

13 It should be remembered, however, that in some respects Virginia was more fortunate than certain of her sister states of the South. She was spared much of the private warfare which embittered Kentucky and Tennessee because the people of Virginia were more nearly united in support of the Confederacy. Furthermore, the emancipation of the negro did not create as great a problem in Virginia as in some of the southern states for her negro population, unlike that of South Carolina and Mississippi, was less than her white population. Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 26.

14 Many of the recently freed negroes preferred to wander aimlessly around the State enjoying their new freedom rather than to engage in any constructive work. There were others, too, who felt that they should be given higher wages than many of the impoverished planters were able to pay. *Ibid.,* p. 55.



Confederate States of America,

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Richmond, August 3rd 1864

Sir

You are hereby informed that the President has appointed you

Major General,

under Act app^d [illegible]

In the Provisional Army in the service of the Confederate States; to rank as such from the thirtieth day of July one thousand eight hundred and sixty four. Should the Senate, at their next session, advise and consent thereto, you will be commissioned accordingly.

Immediately on receipt hereof, please to communicate to this Department, through the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office, your acceptance or non-acceptance of said appointment; and with your letter of acceptance, return to the Adjutant and Inspector General the OATH, herewith enclosed, properly filled up, SUBSCRIBED and ATTESTED, reporting at the same time your AGE, RESIDENCE when appointed, and the STATE in which you were BORN.

Should you accept, you will report for duty to General R. E. Lee

James A. Seddon

Secretary of War.

Major Gen. Wm. Mahone,

Commanding &c.

P.A.C.S.

Mahone's Commission as Major General in 1864

raised the question, "Would it not be going too far to again intrust this man with the management of the self-same corporation which he so shamefully prostituted to further the ends of his country's direst enemies?"[15] Negotiations were carried on, however, and in the course of a few weeks the railroad was restored to civil management and Mahone was chosen as president.[16]

During the remaining months of the year Mahone devoted himself wholeheartedly to the restoration of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. The roadbed was badly damaged, particularly in the vicinity of Petersburg and Norfolk. In addition to the task of rebuilding it was necessary to replace the rolling stock which had been destroyed after the evacuation of Norfolk and during the siege of Petersburg. His reconstruction of the road won the approval of the stockholders of the company and at the same time gained the favorable attention of the stockholders of an adjoining railroad. Accordingly, on December 7, 1865, Mahone was unanimously elected president of the South Side Railroad at an adjourned meeting of the stockholders of that company.[17]

The South Side Railroad, extending from Petersburg to Lynchburg, was 123 miles in length. The first surveys for the road were made in October, 1849; the work of construction was commenced in December, 1849; and the railroad was completed in October, 1854.[18] On May 1 of the same year the South Side Railroad had purchased the City Point Railroad, extending from Petersburg to City Point, and this served as its tidewater terminal.[19]

15 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, 1, 5. This same unfriendly feeling was expressed against other Confederate leaders. General Joseph E. Johnston was nominated for the presidency of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, but Governor Pierpont was able to persuade a majority of the stockholders of the railroad that the election of the great Confederate general might be resented by the North. His influence resulted in the defeat of Johnston and the election of A. S. Buford to this position. Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 32.

16 Helvestine, "History of the Norfolk & Petersburg," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 4 (September, 1923), p. 77.

17 Frank Helvestine, "The Development of a Great Railroad," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 2 (July, 1923), p. 77.

18 *Ibid.* p. 12.

19 Frank Helvestine, "The Beginning of a Great Railroad," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 1 (June, 1923), p. 7. The City Point Railroad, the first link of the present-day Norfolk and Western Railway, extended along the Appomattox River from Petersburg to City Point. It was only ten miles in length but was intended to connect Petersburg with the navigable waters of the James River at City Point. Work on the railroad was commenced in 1837 but financial difficulties were encountered both in building and maintaining the road. The railroad had a strong competitor in the Petersburg Towing Company which operated on

The most noteworthy engineering feature of the South Side Railroad was the high bridge near Farmville. In the report of the first annual meeting of the stockholders of the company, made in 1850, it was described by the chief engineer as follows:

> The bridge is 3,400 feet long, varying in height from 60 feet at the abutments to 100 feet near the river; the clear spans are 105 feet each. There have been higher bridges not so long, and longer bridges not so high; but taking the height and length together, this is, perhaps, the largest bridge in the world.[20]

It is interesting to observe that at this early day the engines of the South Side Railroad carried names rather than numbers. Some of these were the *Virginia, Tennessee, Nottoway, Amherst, Campbell, Petersburg, Farmville,* and the *Sam Patch.*[21]

The annual report of the South Side Railroad in 1855 stated that a track connection had been made with the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad at Lynchburg. It further affirmed that the Virginia and Tennessee and the East Tennessee and Virginia railroads were being constructed as rapidly as possible, and emphasized the fact that their completion would establish a direct connection with Chattanooga—and thence with South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and the Southwest.[22] It was not until May, 1858, however, that the last link in the great line of railroads between Petersburg and Memphis was completed.[23] For a time the South Side Railroad was the only railroad receiving freight from the southwest over the East Tennessee and Virginia and the Virginia and Tennessee lines. However, in February, 1860, the extension of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad as far as Lynchburg was completed. This was a severe blow to the South Side Railroad for it tended to divert a considerable portion of the freight, through travel and mail in the direction of Alexandria rather than Petersburg.[24]

The South Side Railroad played an important part in the support of the Confederacy. The annual report of the railroad for 1861 stated that

the Appomattox River, but early in 1840 the rights and property of the company were purchased by the railroad. *Ibid.,* p. 6. On July 17, 1847, the City Point Railroad was purchased by the Corporation of Petersburg. It was subsequently reorganized and called the Appomattox Railroad. Its independent history came to an end when it was purchased by the South Side Railroad on May 1, 1854. *Ibid.,* p. 7. City Point is now Hopewell, Virginia, 22 miles southeast of Richmond on the James River.

20 Helvestine, "The Development of a Great Railroad," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 2 (July, 1923), p. 12.

21 *Ibid.,* p. 13.

22 *Ibid.,* pp. 12, 13.

23 *Ibid.,* p. 13.

24 *Ibid.*

about forty per cent of the monthly receipts came from the transportation of troops and army stores.[25] And the report for 1865 declared that "During the period from October, 1864, to April 1, 1865, the Confederate Government monopolized nearly all the motive power of the company, at rates of about one-fourth those charged to individuals, which shows the vast amount transported for the government."[26] At the close of the war the railroad was in the hands of the United States Government but was restored to the South Side Railroad Company on July 24, 1865.[27] The roadbed was in very poor condition, several of the bridges were partially or totally destroyed and much of the rolling stock was ruined.[28]

With but little money in the treasury the South Side Railroad Company found it extremely difficult to secure the materials and laborers which were needed for repair work between Petersburg and Lynchburg. The report for 1865, nevertheless, furnishes a vivid picture of its determined effort at reconstruction:

> We kept up a daily line for travel and express freight all the way to Lynchburg, made up of two trains between Petersburg and the High Bridge, a portage of that place of one and a half miles in ambulances, and then a train of cars to James River, and six miles in canal boat. It was not a very good line, and we had very indifferent cars, and travelers frequently complained of its inconveniences; but bad as it was, it had the important effect of giving us a revenue, which, though small, enabled us to commence paying the laborers, and thus hurry the work of reconstruction.[29]

This was the railroad of which General Mahone was unanimously elected president on December 7, 1865. The situation was difficult but not hopeless. This was clearly indicated in the closing paragraph of the report for 1865.

> We have just come out of a dreadful war, badly crippled both in our road and finances, but with all the disadvantages we have labored under, with our line made up of old railroad cars, ambulances and canal boats, with the competition of the canal which has carried nearly all the freights from Lynchburg and that of the Orange and Alexandria and Central roads for the travel, that with all these formidable obstacles and competitors, the fact that the receipts have averaged over $1,000 per day since we resumed transportation, ought to satisfy the most desponding that the future of the road will be as bright as its warmest friends ever anticipated.[30]

25 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
26 *Ibid.*
27 *Ibid.*, p. 74.
28 *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 74.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 77.
30 *Ibid.* The canal here referred to was the James River and Kanawha Canal, ex-

Since Mahone was now president of both the Norfolk and Petersburg and the South Side Railroad he was able to appreciate even more fully than before the advantages which would accrue from a consolidation of the railroads running through the southern portion of Virginia. A step in this direction was taken at a meeting of the South Side Railroad Company in December, 1865, when the Norfolk and Petersburg and the Virginia and Tennessee railroads were "invited to join their company in a plan to consolidate the general management of the three roads under a common direction."[31] Although Mahone was convinced of the wisdom of railroad consolidation he did not hesitate to ask the opinion of others on the subject. In answer to his query regarding consolidation, J. Edgar Thomson, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, wrote Mahone as follows:

> The advantage of a single management is seen in the reduction of the general expenses of management but chiefly in the increase of business by the power to give through rates for traffic to meet every changing circumstance, the greater dispatch which unity of management always insures to business, and the facility of transferring the rolling stock to different portions of the line when not required for use upon its assigned Division, thus making a smaller equipment answer to do the same business, than would be necessary if each link had to supply the amount necessary for its own work at all periods of the year.[32]

Without a doubt the stockholders of the Norfolk and Petersburg favored consolidation with the South Side Railroad. They could see the advantages of a united road extending westward as far as Lynchburg—and perhaps considerably further. In addition to this, General Mahone had a number of devoted friends in Norfolk. On February 19, 1866, a celebration was held there in connection with the reopening

tending along the James River from Richmond to Lynchburg. It was not able to compete successfully with the railroads and was eventually abandoned after the State had invested large sums of money in its construction and maintenance. The best study of this subject is that of Wayland Fuller Dunnaway, *History of the James River and Kanawha Company,* New York, Columbia University, 1922. The reference to the Orange and Alexandria and Central roads requires a word of explanation. At this time the Orange and Alexandria Railroad ran from Alexandria to Gordonsville and from Charlottesville to Lynchburg. The Virginia Central Railroad, extending from Gordonsville to Charlottesville, was used to connect the two portions of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, and for this accommodation the Virginia Central Railroad was paid 62 per cent of the earnings on the connecting line. Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1868-1869,* p. 198. Subsequently the Orange and Alexandria Railroad constructed its own connecting line between Gordonsville and Charlottesville. This railroad is now part of the great Southern Railway System.

31 Helvestine, "History of the Norfolk & Petersburg," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 4 (September, 1923), p. 78.

32 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, J. Edgar Thomson, Philadelphia, to William Mahone, Dec. 30, 1865.

of railroad communication between Norfolk and Petersburg. The Governor of the State, General Mahone and a number of prominent citizens of Petersburg were present. Colonel Sangster, in behalf of the Norfolk Board of Trade, lauded Mahone as "the war-horse of railroads as well as the field."[33] In response General Mahone declared that "he had no higher aim than the advancement and development of the commercial advantages of Petersburg and Norfolk and the prosperity of the State at large."[34]

The directors of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, however, were clearly opposed to Mahone's plans of consolidation. In response to an invitation of the South Side Railroad to attend a convention to consider the subject of consolidation they adopted resolutions on December 12, 1865, declaring their unwillingness to participate in the proposed meeting. They declared that a consolidation of the Southside railroads would be in violation of their policy of "strict neutrality" and would lead to "discrimination" against the other interests in the State. At the same time they asserted their willingness to coöperate with all connecting lines in matters relating to through freight and passenger travel.[35]

During 1866 the question of railroad consolidation became increasingly important and its friends and opponents were equally outspoken on the subject. Early in October, the proposal was thoroughly discussed at Richmond in a series of meetings sponsored by the Board of Public Works. Resolutions were adopted solemnly protesting against the proposed consolidation of the Norfolk and Petersburg, South Side, and Virginia and Tennessee lines on the grounds that it would be unfair to the other public works in the State and detrimental to the commercial interests of Richmond, Lynchburg and Alexandria.[36] General Mahone defended the policy of consolidation declaring that "the scheme meant protection and equality to every interest, and discrimination against none."[37] James Barbour, of Culpeper, spoke in opposition to consolidation. He advised caution in consolidating into one body "all the power that the law has given for eighteen years to all the corporations from Bristol to Norfolk."[38] Visualizing the possible results of such a consolidation, he said, "Forbear action until you can hear from the people. You are asked to create a corporation such as has never

33 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 99.
34 *Ibid.*
35 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 40.
36 *Ibid.,* III, 37.
37 *Ibid.*
38 *Ibid.,* III, 38.

existed—one that is to extend from Memphis to New York. It was not the policy of the Commonwealth to have a monster corporation in it."[39] Governor Pierpont was present at the meetings and took an active part in the discussion. He was clearly in favor of the plan of consolidation.[40] His remarks, however, raised the troublesome question as to what body possessed the right or power to approve the scheme. There was a difference of opinion as to whether such authority was vested in the General Assembly, the Board of Public Works, or the stockholders of the railroads which were involved.[41]

On Saturday, October 6, 1866, a public meeting was held in Petersburg to discuss the question of consolidation. Resolutions were proposed and carried approving "the adoption of the proposed consolidation;" invoking "the Board of Public Works as the Representative of the whole State, to exert its influence to establish this wise policy of consolidation;" and urging "the prompt and cordial coöperation of the stockholders of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad in the adoption of this policy."[42] Friends of the proposition declared that the consolidation of the Norfolk and Petersburg and the Southside railroads had reduced the expenses fifty per cent and increased the revenue twenty-five per cent.[43] They boldly asserted that the Baltimore and Ohio was buying up stock in the Orange and Alexandria Railroad "with the avowed purpose of getting possession of that road."[44] For this reason, Major J. A. Johnston[45] pointed out, both the Baltimore and Ohio and the Orange and Alexandria lines were definitely opposed to a consolidation of the Southside railroads.[46]

In public meetings and by means of the press, the friends and opponents of consolidation gave vent to their thoughts and feelings on the subject. John Goode of Norfolk declared that "Consolidation meant

39 *Ibid.*

40 Pierpont "advocated a consolidation of the management, but not of the interests, of the roads." Lynchburg *News,* Oct. 4, 1866.

41 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 37, 38.

42 Petersburg, Virginia, The *Daily Express,* Oct. 8, 1866.

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Ibid.*

45 Major Johnston was one of the Directors of the South Side Railroad Company.

46 "The great enemy to the consolidation scheme, is the Baltimore and Ohio road whose President is watching the progress of the present movement, with anxiety, and whose every effort is directed toward its defeat." Petersburg, Virginia, The *Daily Express,* Oct. 8, 1866. "The interests of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad for instance, are inimical to us, and its President, by co-operating with the Baltimore and Ohio, and the Virginia and Tennessee Railroads, might draw off trade which would otherwise come here." *Ibid.*

nothing but united management."[47] It had succeeded in Great Britain, he declared, and was the accepted thing in the northern and western sections of the United States. Furthermore, the proposed consolidation was expedient in order to "give the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad a formidable rival."[48] About the same time a communication was addressed to the editor of the Lynchburg *Virginian* by "Virginius" which bluntly declared that "Consolidation is monopoly."[49] The article asserted, with but few supporting arguments, that the proposed consolidation would be a monopoly which supported the interests of the South Side and the Norfolk and Petersburg railroads and discriminated against the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, the James River and Kanawha Canal, the Richmond and Danville Railroad, the Richmond and York River Railroad, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, the projected Lynchburg and Danville Railroad, and the cities of Lynchburg and Richmond. The writer pointed out that the State of Virginia owned stock to the amount of $2,803,500.00 in the South Side and the Norfolk and Petersburg roads while it held shares to the value of $18,-151,808.00 in the various public works against which the proposed "monopoly" would be directed. "And yet," the writer concluded, "it is proposed to sacrifice all of her stock in other improvements to fill the hungry maw of the Southside dyspeptic."[50]

As might be expected, much of the discussion regarding consolidation centered around its chief proponent; General Mahone.[51] The Richmond *Enquirer* declared that "To monopolize the trade of Lynchburg and beyond, for the South Side road, has, however, been the consuming passion of President Mahone."[52] It further asserted that Mahone's railroad, with its steamboat connection at Norfolk, was no less a Baltimore railroad than was John S. Barbour's Orange and Alexandria Railroad. "We are opposed to them all," the article stated, "to President Mahone's Baltimore road, and President Barbour's Baltimore road, no less than to President Garrett's Baltimore road. The first two are the most harmful, as at present operated; and President Mahone seems most to blame for it."[53] The same paper also expressed a doubt that

47 Lynchburg *News,* Oct. 4, 1866.
48 *Ibid.*
49 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 40.
50 *Ibid.*
51 Petersburg, Virginia, The *Daily Index,* Oct. 1, 1866.
52 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 35.
53 *Ibid.*

the election of Mahone as president of the two Southside railroads had resulted in "diminished expenses."

> The Norfolk road pays him, we believe, six thousand dollars per annum, and the South-Side nine thousand dollars; making *fifteen thousand dollars per annum* for the Presidency of the joint roads — which, we think is about *four times* as much per mile of road as is paid by either the Central, the Orange, or the Virginia and Tennessee lines.[54]

In practically every discussion regarding consolidation there were evidences of strong rivalry among the various Virginia cities. It was natural that Alexandria, as the terminus of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, should oppose Mahone's consolidation scheme. On the other hand, it was to be expected that Petersburg and Norfolk, as termini of two of the Southside railroads, should favor such a movement. Richmond opposed consolidation because she feared that it would reduce her trade with Lynchburg.[55] And Lynchburg, in turn, opposed it because she desired to be equally free in trading with Alexandria, Richmond and Norfolk.[56] The following statement, taken from the Lynchburg *Virginian,* indicates with some degree of accuracy the Lynchburg attitude on the subject:

> What is Norfolk in the present line—what will she be in the proposed consolidation? Merely the *transhipping point* which Lynchburg *now* is for freight seeking a rapid transit to a foreign market. The proposition then is (and it is nothing more nor less) to shift that point from Lynchburg to Norfolk—Norfolk which at present has about as much to do with an airline to foreign trade and commercial centres as B. Butler has with the kingdom of Heaven.[57]

On September 6, 1866, the board of directors of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad adopted resolutions opposing consolidation with the two railroads extending from Lynchburg to Norfolk, and instructed the president to report this action to the stockholders of the company at their annual meeting in October.[58] When the meeting was held at Lynchburg on October 16 the consolidation measure was defeated. The same day, however, Mahone wrote to a friend, "Consolidation was de-

54 *Ibid.*

55 Trade between Lynchburg and Richmond was carried on by means of the James River and Kanawha Canal, and also by the South Side and the Richmond and Danville railroads which made connections at Burkeville. The importance of an air-line railroad from Richmond to Lynchburg was appreciated as early as 1866. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 37. Plans for such a railroad were realized when the James River and Kanawha Canal was abandoned and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad was constructed along the same route.

56 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 43.

57 *Ibid.,* III, 40.

58 *Ibid.*

feated at Lynchburg; not fairly but illegally. The cause, however, will never be abandoned. It is stronger today than ever."[59]

With the defeat of the consolidation measure by the stockholders of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad Mahone found it necessary to turn his attention more definitely in the direction of State Legislative action. In the following months agitation on the subject was redoubled. Supporting Mahone in his railroad policies were Robert W. Hughes,[60] " a staunch friend of Southside consolidation," W. F. Mercier,[61] J. D. Imboden[62] and a host of others. A month after the defeat of consolidation a friend wrote to Mahone:

> The failure, believe me, is but temporary. We are a progressive people. Public interest and far-seeing enlightened public policy must triumph over local prejudice and narrow-minded selfish interest. You will yet gain a noble triumph and in the completion of a great National thoroughfare from Memphis, Louisville and Cincinnati to Norfolk under two great heads have an undying monument to your talents, energy and enlarged public policy.[63]

Early in 1867 the consolidation measure was considered in the Virginia House of Delegates and passed by a very respectable majority. There was considerable question, however, as to how the bill would fare in the Senate. Desiring to achieve victory at any cost, a consolida-

59 *Ibid.,* Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to Colonel John Crockford, Oct. 16, 1866. In response to the letter, Colonel Crockford wrote, "I was mortified enough to see result of vote at Lynchburg on Consolidation but the matter is not generally understood, but it must succeed eventually." *Ibid.,* Manuscripts, John Crockford, Warrenton, Virginia, to William Mahone, Oct. 29, 1866.

60 Robert W. Hughes wrote numerous pamphlets and newspaper articles in support of consolidation. He claimed the following advantages would result from the adoption of the measure: (1) "the consolidation of five hundred miles of railroad under one harmonious and energetic management"; (2) "the completion of the Cumberland Gap road," extending from Bristol to Cumberland Gap; (3) the taking in and cancelling of "nearly six millions of the State debt," and a diminishing of the taxes which must sooner or later be levied for the payment of that debt; (4) the divorcing of the State "from her injurious and unprofitable connection with these railroads"; and (5) the forming of "one continuous line of railroad running east and west between the extreme western border of the State and the seaboard." *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "The Southside Consolidation Act, the great measure for regenerating the commercial fortunes of Virginia. One line, one railroad, one company, one management from the seaboard to Cumberland Gap. Papers, letters and speeches, argumentative and historical, relating to the measure." Richmond, 1867, pp. 3-9.

61 Senator W. F. Mercier, of Loudoun, delivered a speech in support of the consolidation bill before the Virginia Senate on April 13, 1867. *Ibid.,* pp. 27-32.

62 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, J. D. Imboden to William Mahone, April 2, 1867. In this letter to Mahone regarding consolidation, Imboden said, "Discussion—agitation of the question—is what we want. We have all to gain & nothing to lose by it. And all we have to do is to keep up a fire of facts & figures that they can't answer."

63 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, J. W. Stephenson, New York, to William Mahone, Nov. 17, 1866.

tion enthusiast from Norfolk wrote to Mahone on March 3, 1867, as follows:

> There are two men who can be purchased at $500 each. This much sh[ou]ld be expended, if necessary, although I have to raise it in Norfolk. If you want me, telegraph & I will come. *Consolidation must be accomplished without regard to cost.* Without it we die with dry rot. For God's sake & Norfolk do everything & promise everything you can without a sacrifice of honor to secure this great boon.[64]

A few days later Mahone received a similar letter from F. H. Pierpont, the Governor of the State.[65] The letter, marked "private," informed Mahone that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was preparing to make a strike for the trade of the Southwest by constructing a railroad through the Valley of Virginia which would connect with the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad at Salem. Pierpont stated that the Baltimore and Ohio was shortening its route to Harper's Ferry and considered the Valley route superior to that of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. The sentiment in Baltimore, he declared, was that it would not take a great deal of money either to put down an additional track to Harper's Ferry as the first link of a railroad through the Valley, or to alter the gauge of the Virginia and Tennessee line, in case the outlet to the southwest should be by way of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. With these two alternatives from which to choose, the prospect of trade with the Southwest appeared hardly less promising to Baltimore[66] than the trade which she enjoyed with the Northwest by way of

64 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, W. W. Wing, Norfolk, to William Mahone, March 3, 1867. There is no record of Mahone's response to this letter. About a month later Mahone received a similar letter, which read, "In the strictest confidence, I ask what could the parties interested afford to pay for the vote of a Senator who has always heretofore voted against consolidation? If the parties interested are willing to be liberal, I am sure one vote will be secured, and thereby the passage of the bill. I write this by request, and upon my assurance that you will burn this note, and make no public allusion to it." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, April 4, 1867. On the back of this letter is found a notation, "No reply to be made to such a letter," signed "W. M." In this connection, however, it is only fair to state that there are many evidences to the effect that both the friends and enemies of consolidation spent a considerable amount of money in an effort to influence public opinion and to gain legislative support.

65 At the close of the War Between the States F. H. Pierpont was recognized by President Johnson as the lawful Governor of Virginia. He served in this capacity until April 4, 1868, more than a year after Virginia had become Military District Number One. On this date he was removed from office and General Henry H. Wells, a native of New York, was appointed in his place. Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* pp. 29, 105.

66 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, F. H. Pierpont, Baltimore, to William Mahone, March 13, 1867.

the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The letter from Pierpont continued:

> This is all fixed, you may rest assured. You had better spend ten thousand dollars than to let this legislature fail to pass [sic] without securing consolidation. An additional reason for building the Valley road is a determination to control the Covington road if they can. Balto. can afford to spend five millions to accomplish this measure. Commerce and money have no conscience when great commercial interest[s] are to be obtained. Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg & even Lynchburg are ruined commercially if you don't succeed. Balto. will buy up the Tennessee and other S.W. roads. Money to accomplish your consolidation should be of no consideration among money men. You have the best evidences of my sincerity for the interest of Va. You must get your men. The legislation can be saved from all trouble in future on the ground of illegality. I cannot express to you my intense anxiety to save this thing.[67]

The determined efforts of the friends of consolidation were not without success and on April 18, 1867, the Southside Consolidation Act was passed by the General Assembly of Virginia to be in force from the day of its passage.[68] The bill was entitled "An Act to provide for the completion of a line of railway from the Virginia Seaboard to the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, by facilitating the construction of the Virginia and Kentucky Railroad."[69] This measure, according to Robert W. Hughes

> authorizes the Norfolk and Petersburg, the Southside, the Virginia and Tennessee, and the Virginia and Kentucky railroad companies, to unite by vote of their private stockholders in forming a general company, to be called the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, upon such terms as may be agreed upon respectively by their stockholders, other than the State, in general meetings. The general company may be formed and may exercise corporate powers, whenever any three of the four companies thus assent. When formed, it shall have authority to purchase the stocks of the State in the four companies, and the bonds held by the State against them but unless all such stocks and bonds shall have been purchased on or before the first of May, 1868, the charter of the general company shall be null and void. It shall have the privilege of paying for these stocks and railroad bonds, thus purchased of the State, by delivering a like amount of State bonds to the treasurer for cancellation, paying par value for par value.[70]

Regarding the bill as a whole, particular attention should be called to the following provisions: (1) The Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio

67 *Ibid.*

68 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The Southside Consolidation Act," p. 33. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia for the extra session, 1867,* Richmond, Virginia, p. 94.

69 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "The Southside Consolidation Act," pp. 33-35.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Railroad Company was to be organized when a majority of the private stockholders of any three of the existing companies agreed to exchange their stocks for shares in the general company. (2) No private stockholder in any of the existing roads was required to exchange his stock for shares in the general company without his consent. (3) It was the duty of the general company to construct the Virginia and Kentucky Railroad, from Bristol to Cumberland Gap, within five years. (4) It was the further duty of the general company to construct a branch road from some point on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, at or near the Central depot, northward toward the mouth of the Greenbrier River, as far as the eastern boundary line of West Virginia.[71]

Mahone's legislative victory in favor of consolidation brought him many letters of congratulation and encouragement. One of the most interesting of these came from John L. Marye, Jr., of Fredericksburg:

> I cordially congratulate you on the success of Consolidation. You have fought a good fight, against odds which would have deterred most men. If you can draw the requisite capital to put the scheme afloat, you will deserve a monument "perennius aere." I shant despair of the old State, so long as she has some men left, of like spirit with yourself. I wish she had more. Every man in Virginia, not in the service of the petty interests which opposed you, will watch with eager interest the inauguration of the grand effort for Commerce now fairly begun. Your scheme is as interesting for Virginia, as was DeWitt Clinton['s] for New York; and you have the advantage of seeking simply to attract and carry commerce along avenues already complete and ample for conducting it. I have faith in your star! Go ahead. The issues are no less noble, than those for which you drew your sword; and in this case, may it be verified that the "pen is mightier than the sword."[72]

Mahone realized that only the first step had been taken toward actual consolidation. In the press of Richmond and Lynchburg there was still strong opposition to the measures.[73] There was also the bitter animosity of the president of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, Robert L. Owen, and his friends who questioned the legality of the bill.[74] Such opposition, however, only served to stimulate Mahone who was encouraged by the successes of the past and inspired by the possibilities of the future. When he was accused of winning his legis-

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 34.

72 *Ibid.*, Manuscripts, John L. Marye, Junior, Fredericksburg, to William Mahone, April 18, 1867.

73 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, J. F. Slaughter, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, April 19, 1867.

74 *Ibid.* Slaughter wrote to Mahone, "Owens [sic] along with his friends will test the legality of the bill provided they can fight it with the money of the Virginia & Tennessee R. R. Co."

lative triumphs by *"tactics not laid down in the Books,"* namely by the use of champagne and terrapin soup,[75] he declared that the consolidation measure had triumphed not because of good brandy or terrapin, but because of "the unimpeachable merits of the scheme," and that the people of Virginia "en masse" were determined to inaugurate the policy which it asserted.[76]

The summer of 1867 was an unusually busy period for General Mahone. It was necessary to continue his program of improvements on the Southside railroads so that they might become as profitable as possible.[77] Practical results must be achieved to fully convince people of the wisdom of consolidation. In addition to this, advances of capital must be secured in order that the consolidation measure might be fully consummated.[78] Obviously one of the most important steps toward consolidation would be to purchase a sufficient quantity of stock in the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad to gain control of the organization.[79] In this way, if no other, the influence of Owen and the hostility of the stockholders might be overcome.

This policy was carried out so successfully that on October 10, 1867 General Mahone was nominated for the presidency of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad at a meeting of the stockholders of that company in Lynchburg.[80] The meeting, however, was interdicted by military authority,[81] and the election was postponed until the second Tuesday in November. When the stockholders met again on November 12, Mahone was elected president.[82] Congratulating him on his election, Roger A. Pryor wrote to him from New York: "You are now the biggest rail-

75 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Joseph B. Tree, New York, to William Mahone, April 22, 1867.

76 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone to Joseph B. Tree, April 24, 1867.

77 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The Southside Consolidation Act," pp. 23, 24.

78 "As my friend Mr. G. C. Walker and our Secty Colo. Huger were to be in New York in the next two or three days, I have asked them to see you in the matter of the proposition to lend our South Side Rail Road Co. fifty or sixty thousand dollars." *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to M. K. Jessup & Co., New York, May 16, 1867.

79 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, M. G. Harman, Staunton, to William Mahone, May 1, 1867.

80 Mahone was nominated for this office by General James H. Walker, of Pulaski. Frank Helvestine, "The Third Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 3 (August, 1923), p. 73.

81 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, F. H. Pierpont, Richmond, to William Mahone, Oct. 28, 1867.

82 Helvestine, "The Third Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 3 (August, 1923) p. 73.

road man in America, having control of even more miles than Vanderbilt. Your reputation here is as prevalent as in Va."[83]

The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad extended from Lynchburg to Bristol, a distance of 204 miles. The preliminary surveys were made prior to 1849 but construction of the road was not begun until the middle of that year. By November, 1852, the road had been completed as far as Big Lick, now Roanoke, and in October, 1856, was completed to Bristol.[84] Previous to the war a branch line, about ten miles in length, was built to the Salt Works, now Saltville, Virginia.[85] Throughout the road the U type rail, weighing sixty pounds per yard, was used.[86]

The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad ran through a picturesque section of Virginia and one which was rich in agricultural products and mineral deposits. In juxtaposition to the railroad were large quantities of coal, iron, lead, gypsum and salt.[87] Although the railroad was intended from the first to be a through line, with its eastern terminus at Norfolk,[88] careful attention was also given to local travel and freight.[89] In 1857 the Lynchburg and Abingdon Telegraph Company was completed and was in operation from Lynchburg to Bristol.[90] By this time, too, the railroad had severed its connection with Adams and Company and was handling its own express.[91]

In 1861 Robert L. Owen was appointed to succeed John Robin McDaniel as president of the railroad.[92] That year there was an increase in passenger traffic because of troop movements, but a heavy decrease in freight transportation.[93] The demands of the Confederate Army and

83 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Roger A. Pryor, New York, to William Mahone, Dec. 20, 1867.

84 Helvestine, "The Third Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 3 (August, 1923), p. 15.

85 *Ibid.*

86 *Ibid.*

87 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

88 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "The Southside Consolidation Act," p. 12.

89 Helvestine, "The Third Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 3 (August, 1923), p. 15.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

91 *Ibid.*

92 *Ibid.*

93 The decrease in freight transportation may be attributed to the following causes: (1) the almost total failure of the grain crop in the south and southwest; (2) the washing away of the railroad for about thirty miles causing a suspension of all operations for a number of days; and (3) the prevalence of smallpox in Lynchburg causing a suspension of local trade for about three months. *Ibid.*

of the various states and private corporations resulted in a large increase in the amount of salt taken from the Salt Works in 1863.[94] During the latter part of the war there was considerable destruction of railroad property because of the contending armies. The president's report for the year ending June 30, 1865, stated, "The road was open for its entire length 143 days during the year; for 91 days was closed nearly its whole length; and for 131 days closed its entire length."[95] The reconstruction of the road was undertaken in the following months, but it was still in very unsatisfactory condition when General Mahone succeeded Owen as president on November, 12, 1867.

Under the careful supervision of Mahone numerous improvements were made on the entire line extending from Norfolk to Bristol. Those who traveled over the South Side and the Virginia and Tennessee lines in 1868 were impressed with the improvements seen on every side.[96] On the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad the crossties were renewed, the tracks ballasted, and new depots and machine shops constructed.[97] Similar improvements were made on the South Side Railroad.[98] A great deal of money was expended on equipment which appealed to the eye of the traveler and at the same time contributed to his comfort on the journey.[99]

It was observed that Mahone conducted his railroad with the same enthusiasm and confidence that he exhibited as a military leader. His opponents spoke the truth when they asserted that he ran his railroad as though he were "carrying on a campaign."[100] Once again he was found as the champion of Virginia's interests, this time in her struggle with rival railroad combinations, chief of which was the Baltimore and Ohio.[101] His railroad activities gained for him the title of "our railroad

94 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

96 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 6, 30.

97 Helvestine, "The Third Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 3 (August, 1923), p. 73.

98 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 30.

99 "The trains were composed of the finest rolling stock to be had, and in each first-class passenger coach was a colored maid, who attended to the wants of the lady passengers and the children." *Boston Herald,* Oct. 9, 1895.

100 Quoted from the Baltimore *Gazette* in the Richmond *Whig,* Dec. 3, 1868.

101 In addition to the Baltimore and Ohio which dominated the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to a considerable degree, Mahone found himself in keen competition, with the newly consolidated Tennessee lines over which Thomas H. Callaway presided. Richmond *Whig,* Dec. 19, 1868. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 32.

Bismarck,"[102] and "his analytic, inventive and executive skill in every department of business" gave him a place not easily approached or excelled by any man in the State.[103] His chief opponents were John W. Garrett, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad,[104] and John S. Barbour, president of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.[105]

The friends of consolidation took advantage of every opportunity to point out that the proposed route of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad was the most direct line for transportation between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and the Atlantic Ocean.[106] They called attention to the saving in time and cost which resulted from a transportation of goods over the combined railroads.[107] They contended that the best interests of Virginia would be served by the development of the port of Norfolk and the establishment of direct trade with Europe from that point.[108]

The enemies of consolidation, on the other hand, condemned it as a dangerous monopoly.[109] The argument was frequently advanced that the proposed consolidation was a discrimination against the other public improvements in the State and detrimental to the interests of Virginia as a whole.[110] Loud complaints were heard because General Mahone, as president of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad, received

102 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 23.

103 *Ibid.,* I, 33.

104 "But astute and vigilant as he (Garrett) is, General Mahone is a man of far more genius, and with the same amount of means as that at the command of John W. Garrett, he would put the latter far in the shade." *Ibid.,* I, 32.

105 Writing to Governor H. H. Wells of Virginia with regard to his railroad policy, Mahone declared, "Mr. Barbour has heard me before on this subject and he knows that I but reflect the view of the great body of the people of Virginia, in the railway policy which he would undermine. I have an interest and a constituency to serve very different from those which control Mr. Barbour. Mine are the people of Virginia, and the interests of that Commonwealth." *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone to Governor H. H. Wells, Oct. 3, 1868.

106 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The Southside Consolidation Act," pp. 25-27. *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Letters, addressed to the Lynchburg Virginian, on the importance of Railway Communication between Norfolk and the Valley of the Ohio, by 'an Eastern Virginian,'" Lynchburg, Virginia, *Ibid.,* Scrap Books, I, 22.

107 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, I, 9, 11.

108 Richmond *Whig,* July 22, 1868.

109 The writer here defines American consolidation as "a monopoly of a long line of railway under one president and board of directors," and asserts that in Virginia, "General Mahone was the pioneer of the American system of 'consolidation.'" *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 31.

110 This argument lacks conviction in view of the fact that the policy of consolidation had been sanctioned by the General Assembly of Virginia, and the Southside Consolidation Act was paralleled by bills authorizing the consolidation of the Virginia Central, Covington and Ohio and the Blue Ridge railroads; and also the Orange and Alexandria and the Manassas Gap railroads. *Ibid.,* I, 23.

the unprecedented salary of $25,000.00 a year,[111] as much as the President of the United States. His consolidation policy was declared to be motivated by self-interest and the A. M. and O. was interpreted to mean "All mine and Otelia's."[112]

During the summer of 1868 there was considerable agitation in favor of the establishment of direct trade between Norfolk and Europe.[113] On May 11 John Everett of London, England, addressed the citizens of Norfolk on this subject.[114] The following day he was given an opportunity to view Norfolk's splendid harbor and her natural advantages as a great trade emporium. Colonel William Lamb, president of the Norfolk Board of Trade, was in charge of the program of activities and General Mahone was among the invited guests.[115] Everett was favorably impressed by the courtesies which were extended him on every hand and declared "that his visit would ever be cherished with the liveliest feelings of regard and esteem for the people of the South, who had been, as before stated, so outrageously misrepresented in England."[116]

On July 15 and 16, 1868, about four hundred delegates attended a convention in Bristol for the purpose of promoting direct trade with Europe.[117] These delegates represented the commercial, agricultural, mining and manufacturing interests of the South and Southwest extending from Norfolk to Memphis.[118] Enthusiasm and unanimity marked the proceedings of the convention. Resolutions were adopted with the following provisions: (1) that the Norfolk and Liverpool

111 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 15. Friends of Mahone always claimed that his efficient management of the combined railroads more than justified the salary which he received.

112 It will be recalled that Mrs. Mahone's maiden name was Otelia Butler. This sobriquet, "All mine and Otelia's," implied that Mahone regarded the A. M. & O. as a family possession to be used for personal aggrandizement. It should be stated, however, that the Mahone family enjoyed the pseudonym quite as much as did the general public. Conversations with Mrs. Otelia Mahone McGill.

113 As early as 1857 there had been a movement to establish direct communication between the Virginia Capes and Europe. A complete treatment of this project is found in the *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Letters and Documents on the subject of direct communication between the Virginia Capes and Europe; together with the proceedings of the Railroad Convention, held at Bristol, Tennessee, June 3, 1857," Lynchburg, Virginia, 1857.

114 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 122.

115 *Ibid.,* p. 123.

116 *Ibid.*

117 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 31. The Bristol Convention had been planned at a meeting which was held on an earlier date at Morristown, Tennessee. *Ibid.,* I, 9.

118 *Ibid.*

Steamship and Navigation Company be organized to establish direct trade between Norfolk and Liverpool; (2) that a financial and executive committee be organized to take steps toward the permanent organization of the company; and (3) that the various immigration societies in the South be invited to coöperate in the movement for direct trade and consolidation.[119] General Mahone was appointed chairman of the executive committee which was empowered to solicit subscriptions to the amount of $300,000.00 for the formation of a Joint Stock Company.[120] The convention adjourned with the understanding that a subsequent meeting would be held at Norfolk at a time designated by the executive committee.

Accordingly, the convention assembled at Norfolk on October 14, 1868, and remained in session for three days.[121] More than two thousand delegates were in attendance from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Kentucky.[122] It was a jubilee occasion and enthusiasm ran high. A written report was presented to the convention by the executive committee, of which Mahone was chairman.[123] In a speech to the delegates Mahone reported that the capital stock of $300,000.00 should be raised without difficulty, and expressed the feeling that North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky should coöperate with Virginia in this project which was of such paramount interest to each of the states.[124] His speech was a plea for activity and progress:

> The question now is, are we not to act? Are we not to move forward? Are we not to take a step in advance by which a glorious future may be opened up before us? If there are to be found any good results from the late struggle it is that we are now standing on a new field and the whole products of the country are seeking new centers of trade. If we fail to act now, our time will be lost and the old trade lines will be resumed and re-established; and when this occurs we will find, no matter how much we may be better off pecuniarily, that we will have the greatest difficulty in upsetting them. We have an advantage now which the results of the war has left us, and it ought to be embraced.[125]

119 *Ibid.*

120 *Ibid.*

121 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 126. *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Proceedings of the Convention held for establishing Direct Trade between Norfolk and Liverpool; and for completing the connections of Norfolk with the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, and the Pacific Coast, held in the City of Norfolk on the 14th, 15th, and 16th days of October, 1868." Norfolk, Virginia, 1868.

122 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 126.

123 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 52.

124 *Ibid.,* I, 37.

125 *Ibid.*

The convention recognized that the first step to be taken was to complete the $300,000.00 subscription for it was understood that no subscriptions were binding until the entire amount should be pledged.[126] With so small a capital, however, it was evident that it would be impracticable to begin by building ships. Hence it was proposed to charter English vessels to make semi-monthly trips in each direction.[127] There was also the possibility that the new line between Bremen and Baltimore might make Norfolk its point of departure.

Closely associated with the movement for direct trade was that of immigration and colonization.[128] A further evidence of Mahone's interest in every movement that sought to reconstruct and rehabilitate the South is found in the fact that in 1868 he was president of the Virginia and North Carolina Immigration and Colonization Society.[129] Little is known regarding the accomplishments of the organization but on May 23, 1868, John Everett of London wrote to Mahone:

> I hope you are getting on with the colonization scheme; this is the hope of the South, and if you only make that a success the rest *must* follow. I cannot convey to you my deep anxiety about this; 'tis only measured by my concern for Southern Material reconstruction and Railway consolidation.[130]

On November 17, 1868, at the expiration of a year's service, Mahone was unanimously reëlected president of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad.[131] This action may be taken as an indication that his efforts as president of the railroad had met with the approval of the stockholders and that his larger policy of consolidation was gaining favor. The Richmond *Whig* regarded it as a fit subject for congratulation, that in spite of opposition within and without the State, "our Virginia system

126 *Ibid.*, I, 31, 52.

127 *Ibid.*, I, 40, 52.

128 *Ibid.*, I, 12.

129 Squires, *Land of Decision*, p. 177.

130 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John Everett, New York, to William Mahone, May 23, 1868. Everett wrote this letter to Mahone from New York City only a few days after his visit to Norfolk in the interest of direct trade.

131 Petersburg *Daily Times,* Nov. 19, 1868. On the very day of the election R. F. Walker, a warm personal friend of Mahone, wrote him as follows: "I have learned some important facts—Shoemaker, of Adams Express Co. of Baltimore, and other parties are moving Heaven and earth, through Bradley T. Johnson, their attorney here, to put the Virginia & Tenn. Railroad into Bankruptcy." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, Virginia, to William Mahone, Nov. 17, 1868. The opposition of the Adams Express Company to the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, it will be recalled, was due to the fact that this line handled all of its express business entirely independent of the Adams Express Company. Helvestine, "The Third Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 3 (August, 1923), p. 15.

under General Mahone has once more triumphed signally."[132] The Petersburg *Daily Times* displayed much less enthusiasm over Mahone's reëlection. While claiming to favor consolidation, this paper contended that Mahone was not essential to the consummation of the scheme. "We think him the most overrated railroad man in Virginia," it stated, "and regret that the advocates of consolidation seem to have adopted the conclusion that he is the only man living who can make the scheme a success."[133]

An employee of the railroad who had recently been promoted by Mahone was enthusiastic over the General's reëlection as president. He celebrated the occasion by composing a bit of doggerel[134] which deserves reproduction because of the naïve truth which it contains:

General Mahone is our President,
And we are glad it is so,
For there was a little discontent
With the one we had before.[135]

He was very good to promise,
But not so good to pay;
We would not have him "compromise,"
For we want *this one* to stay.

You cunning-looking little man,
It seems to you but fun,
To take up broken-down railroads,
And put them in order to run.

You seem to have plenty of money,
And you are never out of the way;[136]
To the employees it's certainly funny,
Every month to get their pay.

You have straightenend [sic] things out mightly, [sic]
And to some it's a surprise,
Then stand up for consolidation,
And you'll continue to rise.

132 Richmond *Whig,* Nov. 19, 1868.

133 Petersburg *Daily Times,* Nov. 19, 1868.

134 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, I, 44.

135 Refers, of course, to Robert L. Owen.

136 Because of Mahone's knowledge of surveying and engineering he took special delight in personally inspecting the lines of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad. According to George Pennister, who served for a number of months as General Mahone's personal valet, he made frequent trips from one end of the road to the other, generally travelling by hand-car in order that he might observe the condition of the road more accurately. As a rule, two hand-cars made the trip. Mahone and a few of his associates rode on the first car, and a negro valet

The track improves at a rapid rate,
And you'll soon have cars, a plenty
To accommodate all the freight—
On the wood and tie question you're "many."[137]

Some editors have pitched into you,
But they can do you no harm;
"Free Tickets" have played, they know,[138]
And they only wish to alarm.

You need no puffs from papers,
For the books are bound to show
That the road is better managed
Than it ever was before.[139]

The most of those opposed to you
Are undoubtedly "coming in,"
And business men agree it's true
Your course is bound to win.

Then, General, set out your champaigne,[140]
And upon all your friends call;
We'll call your name "Excelsior,"
Just roll along the ball.

With Fink, Reynolds and Huger,[141]
Just keep your "posish" one year more,
And this road will not be second
To the Ohio & Baltimore.

* * * * *

While Mahone was devoting his attention primarily to the economic

brought their baggage on the second. Conversations with George Pennister, Petersburg, Virginia.

137 In 1868 there was a scarcity of wood for engine fuel on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. In order to meet the emergency, coal was brought from Tennessee and burned in combination with green wood. The result was entirely satisfactory. Helvestine, "The Third Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 3 (August, 1923), p. 73.

138 In this period General Mahone and other railway executives made a habit of granting railway passes to editors, members of the State Legislature and to various other individuals whose position or influence seemed to warrant it.

139 The Lynchburg *News,* Oct. 19, 1868, praised Mahone's administration as president of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad and declared him to be "the best Railroad Manager in the history of her Railroad system." A review of Mahone's achievements during the first year of his presidency of the railroad is found in the Richmond *Whig,* Nov. 23, 1868.

140 General Mahone, possibly because of the fact that he was bothered by dyspepsia, seldom indulged in wine, brandy, or champagne. However, he always kept a good supply of beverages on hand for those who visited him.

141 Henry Fink, W. D. Reynolds and Frank Huger were Mahone's associates in the management of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad.

rehabilitation of Virginia the State was suffering the shame of political reconstruction. These events must be briefly summarized in order to understand and appreciate the part which he played in the consummation of the political reconstruction of Virginia. To a large extent President Johnson adopted Lincoln's policy of speedily restoring the southern states to the Union. Accordingly he immediately recognized Pierpont's Alexandria Administration as the lawful government of Virginia.[142] Two weeks later Pierpont moved his government to Richmond and began to carry out the mild policy of the President with a desire to reconcile Virginia to the North.[143] On October 12, 1865, Congressional and State elections were held in Virginia.[144] According to Johnson's policy the political restoration of Virginia should now have come to an end. It was just at this point, however, that the President came into clash with the Congressional majority who held the view that reconstruction would be complete only when political and civil rights were guaranteed to the liberated negroes.[145] It was not surprising, then, that when the Virginia representatives went to Washington in December, 1865, they were not admitted to their seats.[146] In this way the President's attempt at restoration failed.

The General Assembly which met at Richmond on December 4, 1865, revealed its conservative sentiment by the legislation which it speedily enacted. Chief among the measures adopted were the negro codes, or vagrant acts, by which Virginia hoped to regulate the activities of the freedmen within her borders. The suffrage restrictions imposed upon certain groups of Confederates by the Alexandria Constitution were removed by the repeal of the disfranchising article on December 8.[147] The Legislature, apparently oblivious of the changed conditions which existed since the war, went so far as to assume the entire State debt of antebellum Virginia, and at the same time appointed a commission to negotiate for the return of West Virginia to her former allegiance as a part of the Old Dominion.[148]

The vagrant acts were particularly distasteful to the Congressional majority and were largely responsible for the reconstruction measures

142 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* pp. 26-29.
143 *Ibid.,* pp. 29, 32.
144 *Ibid.,* p. 37.
145 *Ibid.,* p. 38.
146 *Ibid.,* pp. 38, 39.
147 *Ibid.,* p. 41.
148 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 24.

which followed.[149] During 1866 Congressional investigations were conducted to determine the loyalty of the Virginians and their fitness to govern themselves.[150] When the General Assembly met again on December 2, 1866, Governor Pierpont urged a modification of the vagrant acts and the ratification of the fourteenth amendment, but his advice was not followed.[151] An extra session of the Legislature convened in March, 1867, and its tardy efforts in the direction of reconciliation were nullified by the Congressional Reconstruction Acts of March 2 and 23.[152]

By the First Reconstruction Act of March 2, 1867, the State of Virginia became Military District Number One.[153] Loyal Virginians felt that no greater dishonor could possibly have come to the State.[154] On March 13 General John M. Schofield was appointed Military Commander of the District. The same day he declared that "he would

149 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* pp. 43, 45.

150 Forty-nine witnesses were examined, the majority of whom were prominent Republicans. Their testimony "affirmed the unfitness of the Southern States for self-government and readmission to their Federal relations." *Ibid.,* pp. 45, 46.

151 *Ibid.,* p. 51.

152 *Ibid.,* pp. 51, 52.

153 William Macdonald, *Select Statutes and other documents illustrative of the History of the United States, 1861-1898,* New York, 1922, pp. 156-160.

154 In 1859 Virginia erected the Washington Monument on the Capitol Square at Richmond. Around the imposing equestrian statue of Washington were granite pedestals for the figures of Jefferson, Henry, Mason, Marshall, Nelson and Lewis. All the statues had been made, and those of Jefferson, Henry and Mason had been put in place before the War Between the States. The figures represented Jefferson holding the Declaration of Independence; Henry delivering his immortal oration, his one hand raised aloft while the other clasps his sheathed sword; and Mason holding the Bill of Rights. The statue of Marshall, holding a volume inscribed "Justice," was erected while Virginia was Military District Number One. The incongruity of the situation inspired Innis Randolph, a Virginia poet of the period, to write a poem on this theme. It was not published at the time because of the Federal censorship of the press. Although it later appeared in print it has never been generally known throughout the State. The poem is reproduced here because it represents accurately and forcefully the humiliation which all loyal Virginians felt under the ignominy of military rule.

"We are glad to see you, John Marshall, my boy,
So fresh from the chisel of Rogers.
Go take your stand on the monument there
Along with the other old *codgers.*
With Washington, Jefferson, Henry, and such
Who sinned in the great transgression,
In their old-fashioned notions of justice and right
And their hatred of wrong and oppression.
You come rather late to your pedestal, John,
For sooner you ought to have been there.
The volume you hold is no longer the law,
And this is no longer Virginia.
The old *Marshall* law you expounded of yore
Is now not at all to the purpose,

supercede the civil authorities only so far as it was necessary in the discharge of his duties."[155]

The Second Reconstruction Act of March 23 clearly granted the right of suffrage to freedmen.[156] The negroes, long under the dominance of the planter class, would doubtless have united with their former masters and voted at their direction if outside influences had not been brought to bear upon them. These new influences were exerted upon the freedman by the Union soldiers, northern settlers and itinerant politicians in their midst. In this connection the activity of the Freedman's Bureau and of the Union League was especially effective.[157] The Freedman's Bureau did much to emancipate the negro from southern dominance,[158] and the Union League incorporated the freedman as a body in the Republican party.[159]

The leader of the radical Republican faction in Virginia in 1867 was

For the *martial* law of the new Brigadier
Is stronger than *habeas corpus.*
Then keep you the volume shut with care,
For the days of the law are over,
And it takes all your brass to be holding it there,
With justice inscribed on the cover.
Could life awaken those limbs of bronze,
And blaze in the burnished eye,
What would ye do with your moment of life,
Ye men of the days gone by?
Would ye chide us, pity us, blame or weep,
Ye men of the days gone by?
Would Jefferson throw down the scroll he holds,
Which time has proven a lie;
And Marshall shut up the volume of law
And lay it in silence by;
And Mason tear up the Bill of Rights
From a nation unworthy to scan it;
And Henry dash down his eloquent sword,
And clang it against the granite;
And Washington, riding in massy state
On the charger which paws the air,
Could he see his sons in their deep disgrace,
Would he ride so proudly there?
He would get him down from his big brass horse,
And cover his face at our shame,
For the land that he loved is now District I;
Virginia was once its name!"

Personal Papers. Carter R. Bishop, Petersburg, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, 1930. See Mary Tucker Magill, *History of Virginia* (New Edition), Lynchburg, Virginia, 1890, pp. 366-369.

155 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 52.

156 Macdonald, *Select Statutes,* pp. 170-174.

157 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 54.

158 *Ibid.* pp. 55-60.

159 *Ibid.,* pp. 60-63.

James W. Hunnicutt, a native of South Carolina.[160] The more conservative Republicans, on the other hand, rallied around John Minor Botts, a native Virginian from the little town of Dumfries.[161] During the summer of 1867 an effort was made to form a coalition party of native white people and negroes in order to coöperate with the Republican party of the United States for the purpose of speedily restoring Virginia to the Union.[162] The movement was short-lived, however, for when the radical and conservative factions of the Republican party gathered at a convention in Richmond on August 1, the negroes were completely won over by the glowing promises of Hunnicutt and the radicals.[163] In the fall of 1867 the question of a Constitutional Convention held first place in the minds of the people. The whites displayed considerable apathy in the matter of voting, but the large and enthusiastic response on the part of the negroes resulted in the calling of the convention and the election of many radical delegates.[164]

The Conservatives, very much disheartened by their defeat, realized the necessity of a thorough party reorganization. About eight hundred delegates attended a convention in Richmond on December 11, 1867, and elected Alexander H. H. Stuart, a prominent Virginian, as president of the body.[165] Resolutions were adopted which accepted the fact that slavery was abolished for all time, and expressed the conviction that Virginia should be restored to the Union and the white race allowed to govern the State.[166] The convention also adopted a complex system of party organization. While the system was not carried out in all its details, nevertheless it served to strengthen the Conservative party in the next election.

The Constitutional Convention assembled in Richmond on December 3, 1867. It was composed of 105 members of whom seventy-two were elected as radicals and thirty-three as conservatives.[167] In the radical group there were twenty-five negroes[168] as well as a number of whites who were not native Virginians. Judge John C. Underwood, originally from the State of New York but now a Federal Judge in Virginia, was

160 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
161 *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 69, 72-74.
162 *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77.
163 *Ibid.*, pp. 77-79.
164 *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84.
165 *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 85.
166 *Ibid.*, p. 86.
167 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
168 "It was the first legislative body in the history of the State in which negroes sat as members." *Ibid.*

elected president of the convention.[169] After a stormy session which lasted until April 17, 1868, the Underwood Constitution was adopted.[170] The Constitution made a number of radical departures from the past. Some of its most significant provisions were the following:

(1) That all citizens of the State are hereby declared to possess equal civil and political rights and public privileges.[171]

(2) That all male citizens of the United States and of Virginia, twenty-one years of age, "shall be entitled to vote upon all questions submitted to the people," with the exception of idiots, felons, duelists, and all those who have held a civil or military position under the United States or any State and afterwards "engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof."[172]

(3) That every person desiring to hold public office in the State must "accept the civil and political equality of all men before the law," and swear that he has "given no aid, countenance, counsel or encouragement to persons engaged in armed hostility" to the United States, nor "attempted to exercise the functions of any office whatever, under any authority or pretended authority, in hostility to the United States."[173]

(4) That the General Assembly shall provide "a uniform system of public free schools" to be supported by the interest on the literary fund, the capitation-tax, a State tax on property, and additional funds from the local units of government.[174]

(5) That taxation "shall be equal and uniform," and all property "shall be taxed in proportion to its value."[175]

(6) That "each county of the State shall be divided into so many compactly located townships as may be deemed necessary," and officials be elected therein for the better government of the township.[176]

When the work of the convention was completed there was a prolonged delay in submitting the Constitution to the people for ratification. It was evident that an overwhelming majority of the white people were opposed to the test-oath and disfranchisement provisions, and the Republican leaders realized the futility of an immediate vote on the Constitution.[177] On April 4, 1868, General Schofield issued an order

169 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

170 *Ibid.*, p. 101. The complete text of the "Underwood Constitution," or the Virginia Constitution of 1870, is found in Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions*, VII, 3871-3904.

171 Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions*, VII, 3875.

172 *Ibid.*, VII, 3875, 3876.

173 *Ibid.*, VII, 3876, 3877. Provision was made whereby the individual might be granted immunity from these suffrage and office-holding disabilities by a three-fifths vote of the General Assembly.

174 *Ibid.*, VII, 3892, 3893.

175 *Ibid.*, VII, 3894.

176 *Ibid.*, VII, 3891.

177 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction*, pp. 102, 103.

removing Governor Pierpont from office and appointing General Henry H. Wells to this position.[178] General Wells was a native of New York who had lived for many years in Michigan and had come to Virginia during the early part of the War Between the States. Despite their hostility to military rule and carpet-bag leadership, the people of Virginia seemed more disposed to endure these burdens than to ratify the newly-formed Constitution.[179]

The appointment of General Wells as governor was a distinct victory for the carpet-bag Republicans and a decided set-back for the scalawags. Without doubt the Republican leaders in Washington made the change because they believed that the ascendancy of the carpet-bag element would increase the strength of the Republican party among the white people in Virginia.[180] On May 6, 1868, the Republican State Convention met at Richmond and Governor Wells, supported by the military power, was nominated for governor by an overwhelming majority.[181] James H. Clements was nominated as lieutenant governor. The Conservative Convention assembled on the following day and nominated Colonel Robert E. Withers for governor, General James A. Walker for lieutenant governor and John L. Marye, Junior, for attorney general.[182] On June 1 General Schofield was succeeded as commander of Military District Number One by General George Stoneman.[183] The radical leaders favored an election of officers and the ratification of the Constitution at an early date, but for various reasons no action was taken during the remainder of the year.[184]

General Mahone condoned the appointment of Wells as Governor of Virginia and was not averse to his candidacy for popular election because he understood that Wells was in sympathy with his policy of railroad consolidation.[185] On the other hand, he was definitely opposed

178 *Ibid.*, p. 104. The date here should be April 4, 1868, instead of April 4, 1867. Throughout this study, which is unquestionably the best treatment of the subject yet written, the governor's name appears as "Peirpont," although "Pierpont" seems to be the generally accepted spelling of the name.

179 Mahone's attitude toward the "Underwood Constitution" is clearly set forth in a letter to Colonel William E. Lamb, of Norfolk, in which he writes, "Let every Virginian for the honor of Virginia vote against the Constitution. . . ." *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone to Colonel William E. Lamb, May 17, 1868.

180 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 105.

181 Wells received 153 votes while his three opponents, John Hawxhurst, James W. Hunnicutt and F. H. Pierpont, received a total of 62 votes. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

182 *Ibid.*

183 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

184 *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 108.

185 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

to Withers because he regarded his nomination as "the design of the B. & O. Road" which had been secured "through the intrigues of the anti-consolidationists."[186] From a personal and economic viewpoint therefore, Mahone felt that the consolidation question should be made the main issue in the gubernatorial contest. Writing to an ally at Norfolk on April 12, 1868, he declared:

> My opinion is, that the consolidation party is strong enough in the State to defeat any man for Governor—no matter on what ticket he may run—if we will only force upon him openly the issue.
>
> The question will be considered as between Baltimore on the one hand, Virginia on the other—prosperity with the success of consolidation; ruin, irrevocable ruin in the event of the failure of its successful consummation.[187]

Toward the close of the summer, however, it became increasingly evident that Governor Wells no longer entertained a friendly attitude toward Mahone's policy of consolidation.[188] Nothing could have appeared more treasonable than this in the eyes of Mahone and yet he hesitated to make an open statement of his attitude regarding Wells.[189]

186 *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone to Colonel William E. Lamb May 17, 1868. In the same letter Mahone wrote, "Let every Virginian for the honor of Virginia vote against the Constitution & let every citizen of the Commonwealth who is interested in her fortunes vote everywhere and on all occasions against an anti-consolidationist." References to Withers' position regarding consolidation are found in *Ibid.* Scrap Books, I, 5.

187 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone to John Goode, Junior, April 12, 1868. In this letter Mahone expressed an interest in the two great east-west lines in the State, the Norfolk and Petersburg, the South Side, the Virginia and Tennessee and the Cumberland Gap roads south of the James River; and the Virginia Central and the Covington and Ohio lines north of the James.

188 On April 20, 1868, one of Mahone's associates informed him that his railroad enemies were "jubilant" over Governor Wells' appointment. "They are evidently determined," he continued, "to have a change in the administration of the Va. Tenn R. Rd. and they feel quite confident that with the aid of Gov. Wells they can succeed." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Henry Fink, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, April 20, 1868. On August 18 a friend from Burkeville wrote, "I have just met with Mr. Hughes, who left Richmond this morning & he bids me say to you that he is informed from sources perfectly reliable, that Governor Wells is taking steps to remove the various Roads now under your control from your management, that he has been consulting the best lawyers of Richmond upon that subject. . . . He says your only prospect to keep the control of your Roads, is to get the ear & influence of Genl Stoneman, before the opposition prejudice him, & that he thinks you should loose [sic] no time in securing him." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, A. B. Garland, Burkeville, Virginia, to William Mahone, Aug. 18, 1868.

189 Mahone's position was a difficult one. If he opposed Wells openly it was likely that he would lose the State Proxies which were so necessary to him in carrying an election in the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. If, on the other hand, he opposed Withers it was likely that he would lose the support of a large number of the private stockholders. His problem was "not to incur the displeasure of either party if possible" until after the State Proxies had been appointed. *Ibid.* Manuscripts, William King Heiskell, Abingdon, to William Mahone, Sept. 8, 1868.

In answer to an inquiry which was addressed to him on this point, he declared:

> Whenever it is proper for me to take a position in reference to any matter I shall expect to do so without the contemplation of reward & certainly without fear as to consequences of any character.
>
> The time has not come in my opinion when it would be either politic in reference to the interests of the Country, or in good taste for those who were paroled at App[omatto]x C[ourt] H[ouse] and are yet laboring under political disabilities to meddle with the politics of the country.[190]

In the fall of the year the opposition to Mahone's consolidation scheme assumed more definite form. On October 25, 1868, R. T. Wilson, an agent of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, arrived in Richmond to oppose Mahone's reëlection as president of the Virginia and Tennessee and to thwart his policy of consolidation.[191] He proposed to Governor Wells that he should sell out the State's interest in the Virginia and Tennessee to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.[192] The plan would have been personally advantageous to Wells and he was willing to approve it. Therefore, he encouraged George Rye, the State Treasurer and a member of the Board of Public Works, to sanction the sale. Rye refused to do so, however, and published the astounding proposal.[193] Popular sentiment revolted against this attempt to make Virginia a commercial tributary of Baltimore and the animosity toward Wells was further increased. These developments convinced Mahone that the time for neutrality had passed and he now began to make definite plans for the overthrow of Wells.

The election of General Grant as President in 1868 and the large Republican majority in the House of Representatives made negro suffrage an assured fact. In view of the existing conditions A. H. H. Stuart now made the startling proposal to the people of Virginia that they should accept negro suffrage with the hope of escaping the disqualifying articles of the Underwood Constitution.[194] At a meeting in Richmond on December 31, 1868, he was made chairman of a "Committee of Nine" which was appointed to confer with Congress regard-

190 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone to William King Heiskell, Sept. 10, 1868.

191 An illustration of Wilson's underhanded methods is found in his letter of October 29, 1868, to Thomas H. Callaway. *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. T. Wilson, Richmond, to Thomas H. Callaway, Knoxville, Tennessee, Oct. 29, 1868.

192 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction*, p. 117.

193 *Ibid.*

194 *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 110.

ing the restoration of Virginia "on the basis of universal suffrage and universal amnesty."[195]

At the same time two Republican committees came to Washington to appear before the Reconstruction Committee. The official committee headed by H. H. Wells, was composed of whites and blacks who were in favor of adopting the Underwood Constitution without amendment. The unofficial committee consisted of Franklin Stearns, Edgar Allan, L. H. Chandler and William Forbes, eminent Republicans of a more conservative type.[196] Several sessions of the Reconstruction Committee were devoted to a consideration of the views of these groups.[197] After weeks of uncertainty the "Committee of Nine," with the coöperation of several distinguished Republicans, succeeded in gaining the consent of the Reconstruction Committee to a separate vote on the disqualifying clauses of the Constitution.[198]

In the meantime the growing animosity toward Wells had created a serious schism in the Republican party. The State Executive Committee had met in the latter part of January and after setting aside the Republican nominations of 1868 had issued a call for a convention to meet in Petersburg in March.[199] For a considerable time Mahone had been in the confidence of the Federal authorities and the conservative Republicans who were working for the speedy restoration of Virginia.[200] The opinion of this group was that a determined effort should be made to gain control of the regular State Convention. Mahone, on the contrary, was very much opposed to such course of action.[201] In the first place, he feared that the conservative Republicans were too weak to control the convention, and in addition to this he was firmly convinced that "it was best for the success of the compromise movement that the

195 *Ibid.*, p. 111.

196 *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 113.

197 *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 114.

198 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

199 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

200 "After Congress had revoked President Lincoln's authorization of the Alexandria Government among us, and made Virginia 'Military District No. 1,' it was to General Mahone that the Federal authorities chiefly turned for advice in working toward reconstruction; and he made all the use his opportunities afforded him to obtain favors for us from our conquerors and rulers." Library of Congress, *Campaign of 1887*. Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 24. This lengthy political pamphlet was prepared by General Mahone's friends, probably largely by W. C. Elam, for use during the campaign of 1887. The material presented is well authenticated although the interpretation is distinctly favorable to Mahone.

201 *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 26.

Radicals should go as far to one extreme as the Bourbons had gone to the other."[202]

At a consultation meeting in Richmond which was attended by General Wilcox, Military Commander at Lynchburg, General Mahone, Franklin Stearns and George R. Smith, it was determined that the compromise candidate for governor should be selected at once and made governor by military appointment. This would greatly increase his chances of election by the people and correspondingly lessen the influence of General Wells. Mahone suggested Franklin Stearns as the man best suited for this position, at the same time assuring him that he would be supported by men of the highest capacity and greatest experience. It is worthy of note that the order removing General Wells and appointing Franklin Stearns as Governor of the State was actually written out and signed, but was withdrawn at the last moment when the friends of Wells obtained the President's order forbidding his removal from office.[203]

The Republican State Convention met at Petersburg on March 9, 1869.[204] For a considerable time it had been evident that the radical Republicans would control the convention and that General Wells would be selected as the gubernatorial candidate.[205] After marked confusion in the organization of the convention Wells received the nomination for governor without difficulty. Wells' friends presented Dr. W. W. C. Douglass, a Confederate surgeon, for lieutenant governor, whereupon one of the negro delegates nominated Dr. J. D. Harris, a prominent negro, for this office.[206] In order thoroughly to discredit the Wells

202 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

203 *Ibid.* General Wells was deposed from the governorship on March 27, 1869, by General George Stoneman, but was reinstated a few days later by the new commander, General A. S. Webb. General Webb served as Military Commander of District Number One for a brief period between the commands of General Stoneman and General E. R. S. Canby. William Henry Tappey Squires, *Through Centuries Three, a short history of the people of Virginia,* Portsmouth, Virginia, 1929, p. 504. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, April 2, 1869. Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* pp. 106, 121.

204 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 118.

205 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 28, 1869. "Wells will be nominated now by acclamation by the Petersburg Convention. An election will soon come off, and a Legislature will shortly assemble. Let us do the best we can for 'Consolidation.' You cannot *make* by opposing Wells. It is now too late. You must hedge." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, March ...., 1869.

206 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* pp. 118, 119.

ticket, Edgar Allan, frequently referred to as "Yankee" Allan,[207] seconded the nomination of Harris. His eloquent speech completely won over the negro delegates and Harris received the nomination to the great disgust of Wells.[208] Thomas R. Bowden was nominated for attorney general.[209]

The nomination of Harris was a clever political move and Mahone's part in the scheme was clearly recognized.[210] Wells was still a formidable candidate, however, for he could count upon the entire negro vote and the support of a large number of radical whites. Realizing that this was the case Mahone and several of his friends determined to divide the Republican party by nominating a compromise candidate.[211] Accordingly after the adjournment of the convention General Mahone, Edgar Allan, C. W. Buttz, J. W. Jenkins, George Rye and a few other persons met privately in Petersburg to draw up a new ticket. Gilbert Carlton Walker was nominated by the group for governor, John F. Lewis for lieutenant governor and James C. Taylor for attorney general. An address was published in which the new Republican nominees were presented to the public. It was signed by Franklin Stearns, George Rye, G. K. Gilmer, and more than a hundred other prominent Republicans who styled themselves the "True Republican" party.[212]

In many respects Walker was an admirable compromise candidate. Born in Binghampton, New York, in 1832, he became the recognized leader of the young democracy in his section of the State when less than twenty-five years of age. Before the outbreak of the war he gained prominence as a lawyer and politician in Chicago. He supported Douglas for the presidency in 1860 but became an active Republican shortly after hostilities commenced. For the sake of his health, it was claimed, he moved from Chicago to Norfolk during the latter part of the war. Early in 1865 he organized the Exchange National

207 At this time Edgar "Yankee" Allan, of Farmville, was commonwealth's attorney of Virginia. Conversations with James M. Quicke, Junior, of Petersburg, Virginia.

208 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 119. To have a negro for a running mate was not relished by the "carpet-bagger" Wells. In this connection Walker wrote to Mahone, "The Wells party are mortified, alarmed—mad! They swear vengeance on Stoneman and *Mahone*. They swear you are at the bottom of the whole thing!" *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, March 27, 1869.

209 Petersburg, Virginia, *Evening Daily Times,* March 15, 1869.

210 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, March 27, 1869.

211 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 119.

212 *Ibid.,* pp. 119, 120.

Bank of Norfolk and became its first president.[213] Although a Republican, Walker was strongly opposed to the disqualifying clauses of the Underwood Constitution. In addition to this it was known that he had exerted a tremendous influence in behalf of the "Committee of Nine" in its efforts to restore the State of Virginia.[214]

For several reasons General Mahone favored Walker's candidacy. Chief among these was the fact that Walker was a director of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad and friendly to Mahone's Southside consolidation scheme.[215] In addition to this, Walker's prestige as a banker made it possible for him to render Mahone valuable financial assistance in connection with his railroads.[216] He was also associated with Mahone in the Virginia and North Carolina Immigration and Colonization Society.[217] It should be clearly understood that Mahone was by no means a Republican at this time, but he desired to see Virginia speedily restored to the Union.[218] For this reason he united with Walker in favoring the adoption of the Underwood Constitution with the exception of the two proscriptive clauses.

There were now three political parties in Virginia. The Conservatives, under Colonel Withers, who were definitely opposed to the Underwood Constitution; the radical Republicans, under General Wells, who favored the adoption of the Constitution without change; and the conservative Republicans, under Walker, who advocated the adoption of the Constitution with the exception of the two disqualifying clauses.[219] Most of the white people in the State were Conservatives while practically all of the negroes were radical Republicans. It was evident, therefore, that the conservative Republicans could have little hope of success as long as there were three political factions.[220]

213 *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* V, 453, 454.

214 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 120.

215 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Gilbert C. Walker, Norfolk, to William Mahone, Feb. 23, 1869.

216 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Feb. 15, 1869.

217 Mahone was president of the Virginia and North Carolina Immigration and Colonization Society and Walker was one of its directors. Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 177.

218 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 117. On December 2, 1868, Robert Bolling of Petersburg wrote to Judge Bond of Richmond, "I understand Mahone's Democratic friends boast that he is making a catspaw of Republicanism, and just wrapping them around his fingers as he pleases." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Robert Bolling to Judge H. G. Bond, Dec. 2, 1868.

219 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 122.

220 *Ibid.*

Although the white voters in the State outnumbered the negro voters, the Conservatives were exceedingly apprehensive regarding the election. They determined, therefore, to hold a convention in Richmond to decide what course of action should be pursued. When the convention met on April 28 the principal nominees, R. E. Withers, James A. Walker, and John L. Marye, Junior, presented their resignations. After considerable discussion they were accepted by the delegates. No other nominations were made by the convention and no recommendations offered as to whom the conservative voters should support. The convention, however, expressed its strong disapproval of certain portions of the Underwood Constitution.[221]

Without doubt Mahone exerted considerable influence in calling the Conservative Convention and shaping the policy which it adopted.[222] His position as the leading railroad man in the State gave him influence with both parties and he was able to convince several prominent leaders that the Conservative ticket should be withdrawn.[223] When this was done at the Conservative Convention Mahone was virtually placed in control of the combined forces which were working for the election of Walker. "He planned the campaign; he secured orators; he made appointments; he furnished the funds."[224]

On May 14, 1869, President Grant issued a proclamation designating July 6 as the date for an election of State officials and a vote on the Underwood Constitution, with provision for a separate vote on the disqualifying and test-oath clauses.[225] With less than two months remaining before the day of election both candidates determined to make the best possible use of the intervening time. Wells conducted his campaign with energy and was the overwhelming favorite with the negroes.[226] There are evidences, too, that the northern railroad interests exerted their influence in his behalf.[227] As the campaign progressed Wells sensed the opposition of the people to the disfranchising and

221 *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 123.

222 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 27.

223 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* pp. 122, 123.

224 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 27.

225 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 121.

226 *Ibid.*, p. 125. H. H. Wells and L. H. Chandler, a prominent Republican, canvassed the State together. It appears that Wells was able to gain the support of many whites as well as negroes. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, May 19, 1869.

227 "I also learned that Barbour and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad people are getting ready to go it strong for Wells." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, May 17, 1869.

test-oath clauses of the Constitution. He thereupon declared his opposition to them, but left their adoption or rejection to the discretion of the voters.[228]

Walker, encouraged and supported by Mahone,[229] was no less diligent than Wells in conducting his campaign.[230] He was a man of dignity and poise,[231] and an excellent speaker. These qualities gained for him popular approval wherever he appeared. The Conservatives at first showed some hesitancy in supporting him. Their attitude changed, however, when the executive committee recommended his election and the adoption of the Underwood Constitution, with the exception of the proscriptive clauses, as the best opportunity offered the white people in Virginia to regain control of the State.[232] By threats or concessions the compromise ticket was able to win the support of many of the old Republican leaders and a small percentage of the negroes.[233] One of the most interesting and illuminating records of the campaign is found in a letter written by Gilbert C. Walker to Mahone from Alexandria on June 13, 1869. It reads, in part:

> I have now been thro' the southwest & down the Valley & have heard & learned much not only of those sections of the state but also this & others. There are but two serious dangers which threaten us. Both ranges of mountains, the Alleghany & Blue Ridge, extending thro' the Western portions of the state were the hiding places of deserters, etc. In the So. West they gradually organized into a society called by outsiders the "Red Strings" & these fellows for the most part drifted subsequently into the Union Leagues. Many of them are now Wells men not because they love Wells or his negro associates more than me but because they have an unconquerable hate of the great body of my supporters whom

228 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction*, p. 125.

229 "To those who look beneath the surface of political affairs, it is perfectly apparent that General Mahone is the life and soul of the Walker ticket." Richmond, Virginia, The *Evening State Journal*, May 5, 1869. The *Daily Express*, Petersburg, Virginia, June 5, 1869, reported Mahone's contribution of $1,000.00 to aid the canvass in favor of Walker. In a letter to Walker on May 8, 1869, Mahone wrote, "I would say make my House yr. Headquarters—but maybe it might loose [sic] you a vote." *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Lynchburg, to Gilbert C. Walker, May 8, 1869.

230 Walker began his political campaign with a speech at Norfolk on May 12. Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia*, pp. 126, 127. His itinerary included Norfolk, Petersburg, Lynchburg, Salem, Marion, Liberty, Christiansburg, Wytheville, Abingdon, and a number of other places. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Gilbert C. Walker to William Mahone, May 6, 1869.

231 "I wish Walker would canvass this upper section of the state; if the people could only see him they would certainly vote for him. His appearance would add more to his strength than all his friends could say for him; it would convince them, he was not a *Yanky;* he don't look like one, & they would see it." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, James W. Walker, Junior, to William Mahone, April 11, 1869.

232 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction*, pp. 123, 124.

233 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

they alledge [sic] were their former persecutors. From these fellows all thro' the mountains of Va. Wells will obtain many white votes—from 5 to 7,000—& perhaps more—possibly 10,000. Again—the second source of danger is the Orange & Alexdr. R. R. Co. I find the effect of its harmful influence here, 1st, in the very general apathy of the people, and 2nd, in the positive avowals of the R. R. men that they should support Wells. I fear that we shall loose [sic] fully 3,000 votes from this cause. They will not all be cast for Wells, but what are not will be kept from the polls. Wherever else I have been the people are awakening & awake & we shall get a very fine vote. More speakers must be sent.[234]

When the election was held on July 6, 1869, a total of 119,535 votes were cast for Walker and 101,204 for Wells.[235] This gave Walker a majority of 18,331 votes, a signal victory in view of the difficulties involved in the campaign. The Constitution was adopted, but the disfranchising and test-oath articles which had been submitted to a separate vote were rejected by a large majority.[236] The election was a definite triumph for the conservative forces in the State. Although twenty-seven negroes and a number of white Republicans were elected to the State Legislature, the Conservatives held a large majority in each of the houses. And the Constitution, as adopted, was free of every vestige of proscription.

That Mahone had a predominant part in achieving this victory is clearly reflected in several contemporary letters. Shortly after the election one of Mahone's lieutenants wrote from Richmond, "Didn't we give 'em Hell! Wells finds you will not have to leave the State, but he will. The majority exceeds our most sanguine expectations. . . . . I congratulate you on our great victory."[237] The same sentiment was expressed, but with more dignity, in a letter which reached Mahone a few days later:

Besides sharing in the gratification which all true Virginians feel over our great and hard-earned victory there is a peculiar joy which pertains to *yourself* alone. It springs from the proud consciousness that you have done more to effect this splendid deliverance of the grand old Commonwealth than any other of her sons.[238]

234 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Gilbert C. Walker, Alexandria, to William Mahone, June 13, 1869.

235 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction,* p. 125.

236 *Ibid.*

237 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, July 12, 1869.

238 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, W. W. Walker to William Mahone, July 17, 1869. In later years Mahone's political enemies sought to deny, or at least to discount, the part he played in the successful campaign of 1869. As late as 1880, however, those who were in a position to speak authoritatively on the subject testified that he had had a leading part in the movement. Franklin Stearns declared that "After the

After Walker's decisive victory Mahone realized the desirability of releasing Virginia from the Wells régime as quickly as possible. Accordingly, he and another prominent gentleman hurried to New York in order to achieve this objective. Here they were able to persuade Horace Greeley to go to Long Branch and converse with General Grant on this subject. In the interview Greeley succeeded in prevailing upon the President to have Wells removed from office and Walker appointed in his place without delay.[239] General Wells, realizing that his political influence had come to an end, resigned from office, and on September 21, 1869, Gilbert C. Walker became Governor of the State.[240]

The General Assembly convened at Richmond on October 5.[241] There was considerable apprehension regarding the seating of many of the members because General E. R. S. Canby, who had succeeded General Stoneman as Commander of the District on April 20, 1869, had declared that it would be his duty to enforce the law regarding the test-oath until it had been repealed.[242] The radical members contended that the test-oath should be required of all State officers before they assumed office. However, on October 6 a resolution to that effect was laid on the table and the opposition finally came to an end.[243] On October 8 the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States were ratified by overwhelming majorities in both houses of the General Assembly.[244]

Virginia had now met all the requirements imposed upon her for restoration to the Union. Accordingly, a bill was passed by Congress providing for the admission of representatives from Virginia, which President Grant approved on January 26, 1870. On the following day

ball was put in motion, it was managed by some of the ablest men in Virginia, and no man did more than General Mahone." Colonel Frank G. Ruffin asserted that "General Mahone took command of the combined forces and organized the victory over Wells and the 'party of hate' which enfranchised the people of Virginia." And Dr. G. K. Gilmer, a prominent citizen of Richmond, wrote, "And now a word as to General Mahone. It surprises me that anyone should dispute his agency in this affair. He could not have done what the Republicans did; but it is due to the truth to say that the Republicans could have done nothing without him. The Committee of Nine were not known in the case. General Mahone was the power behind the throne which was greater than the throne, and so acknowledged, at least by those of us on the inside." Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 28, 29. Richmond, Virginia, *Labor Herald*, Oct. 12, 1889.

239 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 28.

240 Eckenrode, *Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction*, p. 126.

241 *Ibid.*

242 *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 126.

243 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

244 *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 127.

General Canby resigned the government of the State to civil authorities, thus completing the reconstruction process.[245] The next day, January 28, a friend wrote to Mahone:

> In the Union at last—not on such terms as we had a right to expect, but then they might have been a deal worse & so, we ought to be thankful. Now for the *new regime* in the *Old* Dominion. Effete politicians of obsolete ideas must give place to wide-awake men thoroughly imbued with the progressive spirit of the times. My only regret is, that we have so few men in the State of your energetic & enterprising nature, indomitable will and strong, practical sense to urge the *machine* forward upon its new career. This from another source would sound like flattery; but coming from an old pupil, it will, I am sure, be received as the tribute of unfeigned admiration & affectionate regard.[246]

245 *Ibid.*, p. 127.

246 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Joseph Mayo, Junior, Westmoreland, Virginia, to William Mahone, Jan. 28, 1870.

CHAPTER V: THE RAILROAD MAGNATE

> "Years ago, I foresaw that the fortunes, if not the very life, of the three roads now constituting the Atlantic, Mississippi & Ohio, depended upon the unification of their managements, by some form of consolidation; that it was by such means, efficiency and effect was to be given to that statemanship in which the homogeneous system they composed, had been founded. To the accomplishment of that result, and to make it a success, I have devoted the best years of my life, believing that there was no other field of development which promised even to compare with this, in the great and lasting benefits which it would confer upon my native State."—Quoted from General Mahone's Reply to John Collinson's Report to the Consolidated Bondholders of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, January 29, 1877.

THE Southside Consolidation Act, passed by the General Assembly of Virginia on April 18, 1867, provided for the consolidation of the Southside railroads into a joint stock company to be known thereafter as the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company. The bill, however, involved certain financial arrangements which must be completed by May 1, 1868, or it would be declared null and void. Although the friends of the measure hoped they would be able to comply with these provisions, they found it impossible to do so during the following year.[1] The Act, therefore, became inoperative, although the Norfolk and Petersburg, the South Side, and the Virginia and Tennessee lines remained nominally consolidated under the direction of General Mahone who was president of each of the railroads.[2]

With the restoration of Virginia to the Union in January, 1870, the consolidation question was renewed, resulting in "the most terrific legislative railroad fight ever known in the history of Virginia."[3] The opponents of consolidation denounced the lobby influence and asserted "that every lawyer from Bristol to Norfolk was present at the Capitol to press the consolidation bills."[4] The friends of consolidation were equally impressed by the lobby interests of Baltimore, and answered:

When men who have sought Baltimore with impeachment of their native

1 Richmond, Virginia, *Evening State Journal,* April 18, 1870.
2 Richmond *Whig,* March 16, 1870.
3 Richmond *Dispatch,* Oct. 9, 1895.
4 Richmond *Whig,* March 22, 1870.

State, and men who have failed Virginia in every hour of trial, dare now assail her vital points, why should the true sons of the old Commonwealth hesitate to summon to her rescue those who have been, who are, and who will be, steadfast to her interests?[5]

The newspapers of the State entered heartily into the contest and printed long editorials on the subject of consolidation. To a certain degree they sought to reflect public opinion regarding consolidation, but to an even greater extent they served as the official organs of interested individuals and corporations.[6] The Richmond *Whig,* whose editorial policy was controlled largely by Mahone,[7] carried article after article in support of consolidation.[8] A similar position on the question was held by the Richmond *Evening State Journal*[9] the *Petersburg Index,*[10] the Norfolk *Day Book,*[11] and the Bristol *News.*[12] The Richmond *Enquirer,* on the other hand, was the most persistent opponent of Southside consolidation.[13] In addition to this newspaper, the Richmond *Dispatch,*[14] the Lynchburg *News,*[15] and the Norfolk *Journal*[16] opposed the measure.

5 *Ibid.*

6 In this connection the following letter from Lewellen to Mahone is of interest: "In our last conference you agreed with me that our party needed, and must have an organ. How to obtain it has been the question. The Whig is too costly a luxury. The Enquirer has one foot in the grave, merely breathing on public charity. The Journal has an odor about it, that all the waters of the multitudinous seas cannot wash out. What then is our true policy? To me the road is very clear. Raise a joint stock company with a capital of $20,000—buy new materials at a cost of five or $6,000—start a new live paper—and then support it, by taxing every State officer *ten per cent* on his salary or net income of office. This can be done with no trouble, should the Governor favor it, and I am quite sure he will do so, with *your* approval." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, J. W. Lewellen, Richmond, to William Mahone, Dec. 25, 1869.

7 In a letter dated March 27, 1870, W. E. Cameron expressed considerable irritation to Mahone because certain editorials which he had prepared for the *Whig* had not been printed. The letter continues, "To have it said that I am responsible, and yet to have other opinions, policies, & directions than my own obtaining, places me before the public in a light neither enviable nor endurable. It is the more especially irksome to me, always consulting with yourself as I do about any and every significant move, and careful never to take an important step without asking your views and counsel." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, W. E. Cameron, Petersburg, to William Mahone, March 27, 1870.

8 Richmond *Whig,* March 15, 17, 31, April 2, 5, 12, 16, 25, 1870.

9 Richmond, Virginia, *Evening State Journal,* March 28, April 18, 1870.

10 *Petersburg Index,* March 16, April 1, May 11, 1870.

11 Norfolk, Virginia, *Day Book,* April 15, 1870; Richmond *Whig,* April 18, 1870.

12 Bristol *News,* April 22, 1870.

13 Richmond *Enquirer,* March 28, April 2, 7, 20, 1870.

14 Richmond *Dispatch,* March 22, 1870.

15 Lynchburg *News,* April 2, 16, 1870.

16 Norfolk *Journal,* April 5, 1870. The Lynchburg *News* intimated that the Norfolk

The arguments for and against consolidation were very much the same as those which had been advanced previous to the passage of the Southside Consolidation Act in 1867. The chief difference, however, lay in the fact that a state of consolidation had existed during the past three years and it was now possible to present arguments based on facts rather than on theory alone.[17] It was pointed out that under the direction of General Mahone the Norfolk and Petersburg reported a gain in receipts of 139 per cent; the South Side, a gain of 236 per cent; and the Virginia and Tennessee a gain of 98 per cent.[18] Attention was also called to the low rates, continuous transportation, the pro rata system and combined action which obtained on the air-line from Bristol to Norfolk.[19] The reports of the railroads on September 30, 1869, showed that during the preceding year the Southside consolidated line (431 miles in length) had transported 359,054 tons of freight, yielding in all $1,084,310.80, at a fraction more than three cents per ton per mile During the same period the other Virginia railroads (709 miles in length) had transported 383,061 tons of freight, yielding in all $1,283,438.10, at from five to eight cents per ton per mile.[20] These figures led the *Whig* to conclude that "Results will vindicate, and ought to stimulate, the practical theory of consolidated railroad management."[21]

In Richmond there was persistent opposition to the Southside consolidation scheme. It was fomented by rival commercial interests which contended that the measure was detrimental to the economic welfare of that city. The friends of consolidation, however, were able to produce figures from the official reports which clearly indicated that Richmond was the recipient of a large share of the freight which came over the consolidated lines. The statistics presented were as follows:

City	Pounds of freight 1868	Pounds of freight 1869
New York	32,494,226	23,548,281
Philadelphia	5,616,305	7,235,440
Baltimore	5,215,441	6,715,656
Norfolk	4,189,401	4,530,591
Petersburg	11,996,739	8,701,817
Richmond	12,936,670	18,725,156

Journal opposed consolidation, but the *Journal* maintained that it favored consolidation "with proper safeguards against its abuse."

17 Richmond *Whig,* March 16, 1870; Richmond *Dispatch,* March 22, 1870.

18 Richmond *Whig,* April 18, 1870.

19 *Ibid.,* March 5, 1870.

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid*

These figures, the *Whig* declared, showed conclusively that the consolidated railroads, instead of discriminating against Richmond, had contributed largely to the growing trade of that city.[22] It was also pointed out that the provisions of the proposed consolidation bill were of such a nature as to render impossible any future discrimination against Richmond.[23]

One of the most potent arguments in favor of Southside consolidation was the fear that these railroads might otherwise be absorbed by the Baltimore interests.[24] The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, under the direction of John W. Garrett, had already gained a strong foothold in Virginia. This was clearly revealed by one of the supporters of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, who said, "*You may call the roads by what name you please, but from Washington to Danville, and from Harper's Ferry to Salem in Roanoke, is all the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad today.*"[25] The people of Virginia were urged to rally against this invasion of Garrett who desired to place all Virginia at the mercy of Baltimore. It was emphatically declared that "*Non-Consolidation with Norfolk, must and can result in nothing else than consolidation with Baltimore,*" which, the *Whig* insisted, would mean ruin for Richmond and the other cities of Virginia.[26]

On April 12, 1870, the Norfolk Board of Trade passed resolutions in favor of Southside consolidation, at the same time expressing the belief that

> it presents the only means whereby we can successfully compete with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for the trade of the Great West, and defeat the cities North of us, to draw the trade of Virginia and the States West and South of us, through our own State, to markets further North.[27]

It is worthy of note that the measure was passed by the narrow margin of eleven votes to six. It has been intimated that some of the members who opposed the resolutions were influenced by the hired agents and lobbyists of the northern railroad companies while others were motivated by a personal prejudice against General Mahone.[28]

22 *Ibid.*, March 10, 1870.

23 *Ibid.*, March 23, 1870.

24 *Ibid.*, March 28, April 5, 13, 14, 1870.

25 *Ibid.*, March 29, 1870. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, George C. Wedderburn, Alexandria, to William Mahone, March 30, 1870.

26 Richmond *Whig,* March 29, 1870.

27 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 132.

28 *Ibid.* Colonel William Lamb, president of the Norfolk Board of Trade, was opposed to the resolutions. Apparently he opposed the plan of consolidation rather than consolidation itself. When modifications were made in the bill Colonel Lamb

While the consolidation measure was being considered by the General Assembly of Virginia,[29] Mahone was in constant communication with his allies, taking every possible precaution to insure the passage of the bill.[30] Because of the importance of the measure, however, definite action was postponed from time to time until early in June.[31] On June 3, 1870, Senate Bill, Number 75, entitled "An Act to authorize the formation of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company," was carried by a vote of 26 to 16 in the Senate.[32] Four days later, on June 7, the bill was carried in the House by a vote of 84 to 33.[33] It was officially approved by Governor Walker in a communication addressed to the Senate and House of Delegates on June 17.[34]

While the Southside Consolidation Act of April 18, 1867, contemplated the organization of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, the Act of June 17, 1870, definitely authorized the formation of that company.[35] The chief provisions of the bill were as follows: (1) A board of commissioners was appointed to organize the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company with a capital stock of $25,000,000.00. (2) The commissioners were empowered to treat with the private stockholders of the Norfolk and Petersburg, the South Side, the Virginia and Tennessee and the Virginia and Kentucky railroad companies, and receive their subscriptions to the capital stock of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company in proportion to the value of the shares which they held in these companies, with the understanding that no stockholder should be required to subscribe or

gave it his support and urged the governor to approve it. Norfolk *Virginian,* Nov. 28, 1870.

29 The consolidation measure was known as House Bill No. 90 and Senate Bill No. 75. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia, for the session of 1869-1870,* Richmond, 1870, p. 223. *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia; begun and held at the Capitol, in the City of Richmond, on Tuesday, the fifth day of October, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine—being the ninety-third year of the Commonwealth,* Richmond, 1870, p. 195.

30 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 12, 16, 24, April 6, 18, 1870; W. E. Cameron, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 16, 1870.

31 *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia, 1869-70,* pp. 406, 411. *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1869-70,* pp. 204-208, 351. Richmond *Whig,* May 7, 1870.

32 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1869-70,* p. 477. Richmond *Whig,* June 4, 1870.

33 *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia, 1869-70,* pp. 517-521. Richmond *Whig,* June 8, 1870.

34 *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia 1869-70,* pp. 563, 564; *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1869-70,* p. 529; Richmond *Whig,* June 18, 1870.

35 *Personal Papers.* Hon. H. T. Wickham, Richmond, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 10, 1932.

merge his stock without his consent. (3) The Board of Public Works of Virginia, upon the formation of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, agreed to sell and transfer to the president and directors of that company all the stock held by the Commonwealth in the Norfolk and Petersburg, the South Side, the Virginia and Tennessee and the Virginia and Kentucky railroads. (4) The Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, in return, agreed to complete the construction of the Virginia and Kentucky Railroad within a period of six years, and the Commonwealth of Virginia was absolved from all liabilities by reason of her unsatisfied subscriptions to this railroad. (5) The Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company further agreed to give to the Commonwealth of Virginia four millions of Virginia bonds, or of money, the payments to be secured by a second mortgage on the property of the Company. (6) The Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company was given permission to execute a first mortgage on its property, not exceeding the sum of fifteen millions of dollars.[36]

This Act, in its final form, was much the same as Mahone had written it,[37] and its passage by the General Assembly of Virginia was due very largely to his influence and strategy. The *Whig* was jubilant over the success of the measure. "We congratulate the people of Virginia," it wrote, "on this triumph of Virginia interests, gained under the masterly leadership of that consummate railroad chief, who in peace as in war seems to be invincible."[38] The *Dispatch,* which had opposed the consolidation measure, gave an interesting résume of the legislative struggle. The sprightly article concluded as follows:

> The upshot was another affair of the crater. We all went up, and some sustained broken limbs in the fall. Above the scene was the inevitable sugar-loaf hat and the slight figure under that hat radiant with satisfaction. (We contemplate him from our place amidst the debris.) Elder must paint another crater—the conclusion of the great and incomparable railroad war—with its incomparable tactics and unprecedented concomitants.[39]

The passage of the consolidation bill was hailed with delight in the southern section of the State. On the evening of June 8 a grand torchlight procession was held in Petersburg. Banners which were carried aloft by the enthusiastic marchers called forth the hearty approbation

36 *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, passed at the session of 1869-70.* Richmond, 1870, pp. 181-186.

37 Richmond *Dispatch,* Oct. 9, 1895.

38 Richmond *Whig,* June 8, 1870.

39 Richmond *Dispatch,* June 9, 1870.

of the spectators. One of the mottoes read, "Virginia Railroads, Run by Virginians in the interest of Virginia;" while another was inscribed, "General William Mahone—The Champion of Consolidation. Good any way you take him."[40] The same evening there was a joyous celebration in Norfolk. A salute of guns was fired, one for every vote cast for the bill in the Senate and House. The principal streets of the city were illuminated by flaming tar barrels, and there was a vivid display of fireworks in front of General Mahone's railroad office. This was followed by an enthusiastic mass meeting at the City Hall. Hon. John Goode and several other prominent citizens addressed the gathering. Speaking of the consolidation bill and the fierce opposition which it had encountered, Goode said:

> Heaven and earth, as it were, were moved to defeat the measure, but, thanks to the patriotism and integrity of your General Assembly, thanks to the untiring energy of your representatives in the Legislature, and thanks to General Mahone, the king of railroad managers, we have been able to rout the enemy and achieve a victory as great as the celebrated fight of the Crater.[41]

Mahone was sincerely gratified by the passage of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Bill. He regarded himself as the champion of Virginia's interests in her struggle against the encroachments of northern capitalists,[42] and he believed that the success of the measure was a distinct setback to the enemy. Particularly did he fear the growing power of the Baltimore and Ohio which already dominated the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and was making distinct gains in the Valley of Virginia. He was bitterly opposed to the plan of the Baltimore and Ohio to construct a railroad in the Valley which would unite with the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad at Salem. "This must never come to pass;" he exclaimed, "such a connection would make of southern Virginia a howling wilderness."[43]

Mahone's concern about the welfare of southern Virginia created the feeling that he was indifferent to the interests of other sections of the State. Particularly was this sentiment prevalent in Richmond where many people felt that Mahone was "neglecting everything else, and looking alone to the building up of Norfolk."[44] He was urged to move

40 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, II, 41.

41 *Ibid.* Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 135.

42 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, William Mahone to Governor H. H. Wells, Oct. 3, 1868.

43 Conversations with Judge Edmund Waddill, Junior.

44 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 18, 1870.

to Richmond and assist in building up that city, giving it an equal chance with Norfolk and Petersburg. It was suggested that the merchants of Richmond might well afford to give him $25,000.00 a year to settle there and aid her in getting "what Nature designed she should have."[45] The citizens of Petersburg, however, expressed an even greater interest in having Mahone settle in their midst.[46] Shortly after the passage of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Bill certain prominent citizens of Petersburg wrote to Mrs. Mahone as follows:

> You will please pardon the liberty thus taken by a *few* of the personal friends of your good husband in joining with you in congratulations at the happy & successful issue which his untiring efforts have secured to the Old Commonwealth.
>
> We are informed by *good* and *competent* authority that *you and your little ones* are the only *forces* to which the indomitable Genl. will surrender, hence we approach him through you asking that you will intercede for us to induce him to remove to this city as his permanent residence; laying aside the endearing ties that bind many hearts to him, arising from his noble efforts in our behalf during a long and fierce struggle of arms. We; Yes, this city and community owe him a still deeper debt of gratitude for his long, fierce, and indomitable perseverance; and the success which has attended those noble efforts in baffling the aims of the enemies of our good old *Mother Virginia.* Hence it is our desire to invite you & yours to make our good old city your *permanent* home; and expect to [sic], either as individual friends or in our *corporate* capacity, to show *tangible* evidences of our sincerity.[47]

At the close of the war Mahone had settled in Petersburg where he remained for about four years.[48] In 1869 he moved to Lynchburg where he was living at the time these communications from Richmond and Petersburg were addressed to him. During all these years, however, he spent considerable time in Norfolk and other points along the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad.[49] In 1872 he returned to Petersburg where he maintained a permanent residence until the time of his death.[50]

The Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company was formally

45 *Ibid.*

46 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 41, 42.

47 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, J. P. Williamson, Joseph E. Venable, John P. Branch, John Lyon, A. G. McIlwaine, Reuben Ragland, R. D. McIlwaine, Joseph B. Dunn, and Robert B. Bolling to Mrs. William Mahone, June 18, 1870.

48 The family occupied the old Dodson House, now the Petersburg Public Library, on the corner of Marshall and Sycamore streets. Conversations with Mrs. William R. McKenney.

49 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 177.

50 In conection with Mahone's removal from Lynchburg to Petersburg two letters are of interest. One of these came from E. H. Murrell of Lynchburg. It read,

organized on November 12, 1870.[51] General Mahone was elected president for a period of five years at a salary of $25,000.00 a year.[52] Associated with him as directors were Thomas J. Corprew and R. C. Taylor, of Norfolk; R. B. Bolling, J. A. Johnston and R. D. McIlwaine, of Petersburg; C. W. Statham and J. F. Slaughter, of Lynchburg; William Watts, of Roanoke; James A. Walker, of Pulaski; and A. Fulkerson, of Washington County.[53] A considerable degree of "harmony and brotherhood" marked the inauguration of the consolidation scheme which had previously evoked such hostility and bitterness.[54]

During 1870 the South Side and the Virginia and Tennessee lines suffered heavy damages because of flood waters. The repair work was carried on by the two division units of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company. Mahone's purpose, as always, was to achieve "the rapid and thorough reconstruction of the roadway to the condition of a first-class work."[55] Stockholders in the old companies were urged to exchange their shares for those in the new organization in order that

"It will give me great pleasure to have an *introduction* to you on your next arrival in this City. After this would like to extend to you the hospitality of my mansion whenever you and your Family may visit this City of Persecution." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, E. H. Murrell, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, April 22, 1872. The second letter was written by Mahone from Lynchburg to a friend in Mobile. It read, "I have an office here, and spend much of my time hereabouts—am rarely off my line. My family are residing in Petersbg [sic] where they would be delighted to see you and where I would greatly prefer to visit you—as the guest of my house. Do make us a call." *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Lynchburg, to General J. M. Withers, Mobile, July 5, 1872. Lynchburg had indeed been a "City of Persecution" to Mahone both because of the strong opposition to consolidation which prevailed there and also because of the personal prejudice of the friends of R. L. Owen, former president of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. Mahone and his family were able to escape some of this animosity and hostility by moving to Petersburg. At the same time this city was more strategically located from a political standpoint because of its proximity to Richmond. Mahone found this factor of increasing importance as he turned his attention more and more to political matters. For several months the family occupied the old Corling house on Union Street, which was situated just north of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. In 1873 General Mahone purchased the White property on South Market Street where he constructed a beautiful and spacious residence. A large room in the basement of the home served as Mahone's official headquarters in all of his subsequent political campaigns. Petersburg, Virginia, Hustings Court, *Deed Book,* No. 35, pp. 373, 374. No. 36, p. 491.

51 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 136. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 60.

52 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone," 1889, p. 10.

53 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 136.

54 Richmond *Whig,* Nov. 18, 1870.

55 Frank Helvestine, "The Fifth Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 5 (October, 1923), p. 18.

the benefits of consolidation might be realized the more speedily and completely.[56]

On March 28, 1871, the Virginia Legislature passed a bill which provided for the sale of the State's railway stock at a sacrifice. Governor Walker favored the measure and exerted his influence in its behalf. It was bitterly fought, but the negro vote was finally instrumental in carrying it. The Act may have appeared justifiable in view of the changing conditions in the State, but many people resented it and "felt that their property had been bartered away."[57]

Under the provisions of the bill some amazing financial transactions took place. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company, through its agent, Thomas Scott, soon took steps to get possession of the State's interest in the Richmond and Danville Railroad.[58] It was later stated that "the scheme to get possession of the Danville Road was concocted in the Governor's mansion, & that the *Penn Central* gave James Walker 2000 shares of stock for his services in obtaining the Road for them."[59] The Pennsylvania Railroad Company also took steps to gain control of the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad.[60] In a similar manner the Baltimore and Ohio further strengthened its control over the Orange and Alexandria Railroad by purchasing the stock which the City of Alexandria held in that Company.[61] The sale of the State's railway stock at an immense loss was carried on relentlessly until nothing remained save its investment in the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad. This particular stock was never sold, and at the present time brings the State a handsome return on the investment.[62]

56 Richmond *Whig,* Nov. 18, 1870.

57 Richard L. Morton, *History of Virginia,* Vol. III, *Virginia Since 1861,* Chicago and New York, 1924, 6 vols., III, 162, 163.

58 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker to William Mahone, Sept. 12, 1871.

59 *Ibid.,* Manuscripts, Alex. B. Cochran, Stribling Springs, Augusta County, Virginia, to William Mahone, Sept. 7, 1873. This statement was made to Cochran by Major G. H. Bardwell, formerly an active member of the Pennsylvania Railroad Ring. James Walker was a brother of Gilbert C. Walker, the Governor of Virginia. *Ibid.,* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker to William Mahone, April 18, 1870.

60 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker to William Mahone, Sept. 12, 1871. The *Shenandoah Democrat,* March 30, 1871, contains this amazing statement, "The Richmond and Petersburg railroad case has been finally disposed of by the Legislature. It seems that there were two purchasers for the State's interest—General Mahone and a Mr. Walters, of Baltimore—the former offering $200 per share for it and the latter $150. Contrary to all precedent, and the law regulating public auctions, the lowest bidder got the stock. The loss to the State is $200,000."

61 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Charles P. Moncure, Rapidan Station, to William Mahone, Nov. 16, 1869; July 28, 1871; R. F. Walker to William Mahone, Sept. 12, 1871.

62 *Personal Papers.* W. C. Carrick, General Auditor of the R. F. and P. Railroad Company, Richmond, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 12, 1932.

In the summer of 1871 John Collinson, the representative of the English capitalists, while on a visit to the United States, conferred with General Mahone regarding the financing of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad. The Railroad Act of June 17, 1870, and the formal organization of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company on November 12, 1870, had prepared the way for English investment in this promising enterprise.[63] The financial condition of the railroad, however, necessitated a large loan, properly secured by mortgages, and it was relative to this that Mahone and Collinson conferred. On September 9, 1871, shortly after his return to London, Collinson wrote Mahone as follows:

> I am much pleased to hear of your probable arrangements for controlling additional Road which will be tributary to your main line, and I am also glad that you have finally decided to place the negotiation of your loan in my hands, as though I found a great deal of business to attend to on my return to England, I am so well satisfied with the character of yours that I am desirous of being connected with it.
>
> The markets here are in very good condition, better than I ever anticipated. I have formed a strong syndicate of my friends to take up the loan, and if we can only bring it out within a short time it will prove unquestionably a decided success.
>
> I must beg of you to expediate [sic] matters as much as possible and hurry on the delivery of the bonds as the present favorable opportunity must on no account be missed.[64]

On September 29, 1871, a formal agreement was entered into between John Collinson of London, England, and General Mahone, president of the railroad.[65] The preface declared that the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, under the Act of June 17, 1870, had been authorized to issue a consolidated loan of $15,000,000.00 in gold bonds as a first mortgage on all real and personal property belonging to the company. Accordingly, the company agreed to deposit 5,500 of these bonds, valued at $5,500,000.00 with a board of trustees in New York City,[66] the payment of these bonds being guaranteed by

63 *Ibid.* H. T. Wickham, Richmond, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 10, 1932.

64 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John Collinson, London, to William Mahone, Sept. 9, 1871.

65 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, "Memorandum of an Agreement entered into between *John Collinson,* of London, England, party of the first part, and *the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company,* (hereinafter called the Company) by *General William Mahone,* President thereof, party of the second part."

66 The board of trustees was composed of Francis Skiddy, William Butler Duncan, and Samuel Latham Mitchell Barlow. The bonds were to be deposited by them for safe keeping with Messieurs Duncan, Sherman and Company, New York City Bankers. *Ibid.*

the tangible and intangible property of the company. In return, Collinson agreed to buy 9,500 of the $1,000.00 seven per cent gold bonds of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, in the following installments: 1,000 on September 29, 1871; 1,000 on January 1, 1872; 1,000 on April 1, 1872; 1,000 on July 1, 1872; 1,000 on October 1, 1872; 1,000 on January 1, 1873; 1,000 on April 1, 1873; 1,000 on July 1, 1873; and 1,500 on October 1, 1873; representing a total value of $9,500,000.00. Collinson agreed to pay sixty-eight per cent gold and accrued interest for each of the 9,500 bonds "against their delivery to him in London." Another important feature of the agreement was to the effect that Mahone would purchase through the agency of John Collinson in England all the iron that would be needed in the rebuilding of the main roadbed of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad from Norfolk to Bristol, and in constructing the proposed extension from Bristol to Cumberland Gap.[67]

Collinson immediately set to work in England to negotiate the loan but found a number of difficulties confronting him. Writing to Mahone on October 10, 1871, he declared that objections had been raised because "it was a Southern loan, that it was practically not a first mortgage, that the net receipts were barely sufficient to cover the interest on even the present emission, and that an opposition line was going to be built, supported by some of the most influential men in America."[68] During November the prospect of a rapid sale of the bonds became more favorable. Collinson was pleased with the progress he had made, especially since he had to proceed "in the face of great difficulties such as the bad condition of the Money Market, the Tyson suit, and the opposition of the Norfolk and Great Western and Pennsylvania Railroad people."[69] On December 2 he wrote that he had taken 2,500 bonds. He urged Mahone to send in an order for iron since the price was rising at "the rate of nearly one shilling per week."[70]

These letters from Collinson indicate a few of the problems which Mahone encountered soon after the organization of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company. One of these was the threatened rivalry of the Norfolk and Great Western Railroad.[71] Closely allied

67 The agreement contained a number of other provisions which, however, do not constitute an essential part of this study. *Ibid.*

68 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John Collinson, London, to William Mahone, Oct. 10, 1871.

69 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Nov. 25, 1871.

70 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Dec. 2, 1871.

71 On Sept. 15, 1871, Collinson wrote to Mahone, "A very influential friend of mine in the London Stock Exchange called me today, and presented a return to me which

with this was the effort of the Pennsylvania Railroad to gain a strangle hold on the important railroads of the South.[72] There was also the Tyson suit against Mahone[73] which was instigated, no doubt, by the northern railroad interests.[74] In addition to these difficulties Mahone faced the necessity of putting his railroad in first-class condition, and of constructing the Cumberland Gap extension as set forth in the Railroad Bill of June 17, 1870.

In 1871, during the Tyson suit, Governor Walker expressed the fear that the three foreign companies, the Pennsylvania, the Baltimore and Ohio, and the Chesapeake and Ohio, might unite in order to divide Mahone's railroad, and suggested that his "true policy was to form an alliance with one at least of these, so as to be protected against such a combination."[75] During the following year Mahone became convinced that Tom Scott, Vice President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, constituted an even greater threat to the Virginia railroads than John Garrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio. By this time the Pennsylvania Railroad, through the Southern Security Company, had gained control of the short line extending southward from Alexandria to Quantico, and of the southern lines extending northward as far as Bristol and Richmond.[76] Only the short gap from Richmond to Quantico separated its northside and southside systems. Mahone was so intent on keeping this connecting link out of the hands of Scott that he was even willing to see it purchased by Garrett.[77]

had just been brought over from America. It is a loan for $10,000,000 Norfolk & Great Western Railroad Bonds, $6,000,000 of which are guaranteed by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Negotiations had already been opened with a Paris house, but co-operation was desired here. I have managed to secure some delay, and hope to postpone the matter until after our issue." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Sept. 15, 1871. The plan of the Norfolk and Great Western Railroad Company, it would appear, was to construct a railroad westward from Norfolk through the southern portion of Virginia which would make connections with other railroads extending to the west and southwest.

72 In this connection Mahone wrote to a friend in Winchester, "Scott's great scheme of southern subjugation will break down, mark my word for it. We have nothing to fear from his infernal designs, if we will only stand firm in Virga. & do our duty to the Commonwealth." *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone to N. B. Meade, Winchester, Virginia, March 18, 1872.

73 Lynchburg *Republican*, Oct. 21, 1871.

74 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, A. Moseley, Richmond, to William Mahone, Oct. 29, 1871.

75 *Ibid.*

76 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone to Major John M. Robinson, Nov. 6, 1872.

77 Mahone felt that by uniting his efforts with those of John W. Garrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio, and John M. Robinson, President of the Baltimore Steam Packet Company, it would be possible to seal the fate of the Southern

In 1872 Collinson found it difficult to meet the orders of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad for iron rails. On July 23, he wrote to Mahone:

> It is impossible for you in America to conceive the unsettled state of the iron market and in fact of all trades in England; everyone is either on strike or threatening to strike and the Masters can get no work done. I am afraid that considerable delays will consequently occur in the delivery of your rails, but I am bringing all possible pressure to bear on the makers, who, however if their men will not work, cannot fulfill their contracts to the letter.[78]

The sale of bonds, however, continued in a satisfactory manner, and on August 24 Collinson reported that he had taken 5,400 of the Company's first mortgage seven per cent gold bonds.[79] When Mahone's report was read before the annual meeting of the stockholders of the company at Norfolk on December 19 it was received "with much satisfaction."[80]

Late in 1872 Collinson made a trip to the United States. In January, 1873, shortly before returning to England, he had a pleasant visit with General Mahone.[81] Upon his arrival in England Collinson found that the markets for Mahone's bonds "were in a most deplorable condition" because of the non-arrival of the annual report of the Company.[82] However, when the material reached Collinson he hastened to congratulate Mahone on the "exceedingly satisfactory nature" of the receipts. "If they continue as at the present time," he added, "they will fully realize the expectations held forth."[83] Collinson and Mahone still found it necessary, however, to contend with the prejudicial rumors which were circulated by the Pennsylvania Railroad regarding the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad.[84]

Security Company and to frustrate the designs of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. *Ibid.*

78 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John Collinson, London, to William Mahone, July 23, 1872.

79 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Aug. 24, 1872.

80 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 148.

81 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John Collinson, New York, to William Mahone, Dec. 16, 1872; Jan. 21, 1873.

82 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Feb. 27, 1873.

83 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Apr. 3, 1873.

84 In this connection Collinson wrote to Mahone, "Your favour of the 20th ult. is to hand and I am much pleased to hear of your success in your campaign against Tom Scott and Co. They seem to have a very bitter animus against you as they are not content with fighting you in Virginia but do their utmost to injure us here. The last report that they have spread and that I find very generally is that you have been cut off from all your western connections and consequently have only local traffic to depend upon. Fortunately we have a very satisfactory reply to give to such an assertion in the frequent publications I make in our papers here of the very favourable traffic returns received from you for the last months." *Ibid.*

Despite Mahone's earnest desire to construct the Virginia and Kentucky Railroad, extending westward from Bristol to Cumberland Gap, nothing definite had been done by 1873.[85] Responsibility for the delay did not rest on Mahone alone but also upon the financiers who were responsible for the construction of railroads in Tennessee and Kentucky.[86] Mahone believed that the best route from Bristol to Memphis was by way of Cumberland Gap and Nashville, rather than through Knoxville and Chattanooga, and this was the road which he hoped to see built.[87] Likewise he wanted to see railroads constructed in Kentucky which would establish connections between Cumberland Gap and both Cincinnati and Louisville on the Ohio River.[88] The completion of these roads would mean the realization of a dream which Mahone had long cherished—an actual Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad.[89]

In 1873 a number of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad bonds had been purchased in Holland as well as in England.[90] The Dutch bondholders became very much alarmed early in the year because of a report that the people of southwestern Virginia were threatening to bring legal proceedings against the railroad on account of its failure to commence the extension from Bristol to Cumberland Gap. Collinson regarded this as a report circulated by the enemies of the company and reminded them that the Railroad Act of 1870 required the completion of the Virginia and Kentucky Railroad within six years, but nowhere stipulated the date of its commencement.[91]

While Mahone was unable financially to undertake the construction of the Cumberland Gap extension in 1873, he continued to make numerous improvements on the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad.[92] In the report for 1873 he stated:

The work of improvement has now been prosecuted nearly to its completion. The main stem of the road is ballasted thoroughly except about thirty miles, the

85 Richmond *Whig,* May 20, 1871. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 79.

86 Richmond *Whig,* May 29, 1871. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, III, 80, 81, 83, 84.

87 Writing to N. B. Meade on March 18, 1872, Mahone said, "We get to Nashville & to Memphis via Cumberland Gap in a shorter time than via Chattanooga." *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone to N. B. Meade, Winchester, March 18, 1872. *Ibid.* Scrap Books, III, 81.

88 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, III, 79, 81.

89 An excellent map of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad and its proposed connections with Cincinnati, Louisville and Memphis is found in the *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "The Southside Consolidation Act," p. 32.

90 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John Collinson, London, to William Mahone, April 9, May 23, 1873.

91 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, May 23, 1873.

92 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 14, 73-76.

iron has been renewed wherever necessary, until there remains now but a small amount to be relaid; new depot buildings have been erected, and the whole line may safely be said to be in a condition unequalled at any period of its existence.[93]

Mahone exercised the utmost care in selecting the finest possible material for his railroad. Soon after assuming the presidency of the line he purchased a number of nickel and brass-plated locomotives. The tenders were painted a bright, luminous red, and the boilers were a mass of shining, glittering steel. The well-equipped trains never failed to excite the admiration of those who traveled on the line.[94]

The financial panic of 1873 came as a severe blow to the United States. Just as the South was regaining the control of its local affairs after the hardships and anguish of political reconstruction, this "crowning disaster" burst upon it. On September 18, 1873, Jay Cooke and Company failed and the financial crash followed.[95] As early as May of this year Collinson had deplored the situation in England and Holland, declaring that there were "little signs of change excepting for the worse."[96] In September he advised Mahone to endeavor to sell some of the bonds in the United States because, he wrote, "our hopes of the market improving on this side for a considerable time to come are now at a very low ebb on account of the repeated informations of defaults in paying interest and failures of banking firms in America."[97]

The distressing financial situation throughout the United States was reflected in the decreased receipts of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company.[98] As a result of this, Mahone was unable to forward the remittances for the October coupons on the customary date. This unfortunate delay further increased the apprehension regarding the bonds of the company, and within a single week they declined in value no less than ten per cent, or about one hundred dollars gold per bond.[99] On October 28 Collinson wrote that the bonds had depreciated to about fifty per cent gold on the public markets and that he would be unable at that time to take further bonds of the company at the rate of sixty-eight per cent gold.[100]

93 Helvestine, "The Fifth Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 5 (October, 1923), p. 18.

94 *Boston Herald,* Oct. 9, 1895.

95 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 181.

96 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John Collinson, London, to William Mahone, May 3, 1873.

97 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Sept. 20, 1873.

98 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Oct. 28, 1873.

99 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Oct. 1, 1873.

100 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Oct. 28, 1873.

Until the depression of 1873 Mahone had been able, without exception, to meet the interest payments on the old mortgages and the consolidated loan. On November 28, however, he expressed the fear to Collinson that on January 1 he would be unable even to meet the payments on the old mortgages.[101] In reply Collinson expressed "the greatest surprise and sorrow," for the traffic returns of the railroad which he had received from time to time had led him to believe that the road was in "an excellent financial position."[102] He lamented the fact, too, that this information should reach him just when the bonds of the company had been brought gradually from the low mark of 37 up to 46. "I cannot make up my mind to the belief that all of our efforts are to be thrown away," he declared, "and that an undertaking such as yours is to be crippled forever, by a temporary pressure."[103]

On December 1 General Mahone issued a circular letter which set forth the retrenchment policy of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company.[104] "Out of a due regard to the affairs of the Company," he wrote, "as well as in deference to the extreme exigency which presses severely upon every species of industry, pecuniary and material, of the whole country, a reduction of its expenses and of its expenditure is demanded." He expressed a sincere regret that the necessity of the times and the diminution of business compelled the company to effect "a reduction not only of its force but of the compensation to those who are retained." Those who were discharged were promised reëmployment as soon as business conditions justified it. Salary reductions were stipulated which fell most heavily on those who were best able to bear them.[105] This step, drastic as it was, was met by "a most cheerful and commendable coöperation" on the part of the officials and employees of the company.[106]

As Mahone had feared, the railroad was unable to meet its interest payments on January 1, 1874.[107] Under the circumstances he was in favor of indefinitely postponing the construction of the Virginia and Kentucky Railroad from Bristol to Cumberland Gap. It was apparent

101 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Dec. 11, 1873.

102 *Ibid.*

103 *Ibid.*

104 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, III, 34.

105 Salaries of the officials were reduced twenty per cent and those of the employees from ten to twelve and one-half cent. *Ibid.*

106 Helvestine, "The Fifth Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 5 (October, 1923), p. 19.

107 Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States, for 1874-1875*, p. 224.

that to commence the work at such a time would be "cruel to the bondholders" and against all policy, reason and common sense.[108] The proposed extension was abandoned, however, only with the approval of an Act of the General Assembly on April 29, 1874.[109] This action was most disappointing to the people of southwestern Virginia, and tended to increase the already prevalent sectional feeling in the State.[110] "To whom can we now look for relief?" wrote E. F. Tiller to Mahone. "Who or what Corporation is willing to come to our aid? Is there any that will run the risk of passing through the ordeal to suffer the 'slings and arrows' your Co. has suffered to aid a people that have shown themselves through and by their Representatives to be wanting in gratitude and I fear wanting in justice and honesty?"[111]

In the latter part of 1874 the receipts of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio showed a decided increase. Within three months, however, a discouraging reaction made itself manifest. In this connection Mahone wrote to Collinson:

> At the close of our fiscal year the outlook was so much better than during the preceding twelve months, and so abruptly had grown our traffic, that hopes were founded—perhaps too quickly—for a better year's result than we are likely to realize. Our business for October, November, and December, and especially for the two months first named, had fully returned to the results of the Company's best days; but, if anything, more abruptly, our traffic fell off in January to a very disheartening extent—to $110,000 estimated, as against $152,000 in the panic year, and as against $176,000 for January of 1872-73. February does not promise to exceed the corresponding month of last year ($154,536); it may hold to the same figures, or near by them.[112]

In October, 1875, Mahone[113] made a trip to London to confer with Collinson and the English bondholders regarding the financial condition

108 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, A. L. Pridemore, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 13, 1874.

109 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "A Reply to John Collinson's Report to the Consolidated Bondholders of the Atlantic, Mississippi & Ohio Rail Road Company. (Dated London, August 17th, 1876)." With addenda containing Collinson's report, Jan. 29, 1877, p. 3.

110 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, A. L. Pridemore, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 13, 1874; E. F. Tiller, Estillville, Virginia, to William Mahone, Apr. 30, 1874.

111 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, E. F. Tiller, Estillville, Virginia, to William Mahone, Apr. 30, 1874.

112 *Ibid.* Printed Letters, John Collinson, London, to the bondholders of the Consolidated Mortgage Loan of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, March 19, 1875. Circular letters of this sort were sent out to the Consolidated bondholders from time to time as Collinson received important communications from Mahone.

113 Mahone was accompanied on the trip by his younger son, Robert Butler. *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Nov. 8, 1875.

Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad

Consolidated by Act of June 17, 1870

STATE OF VIRGINIA

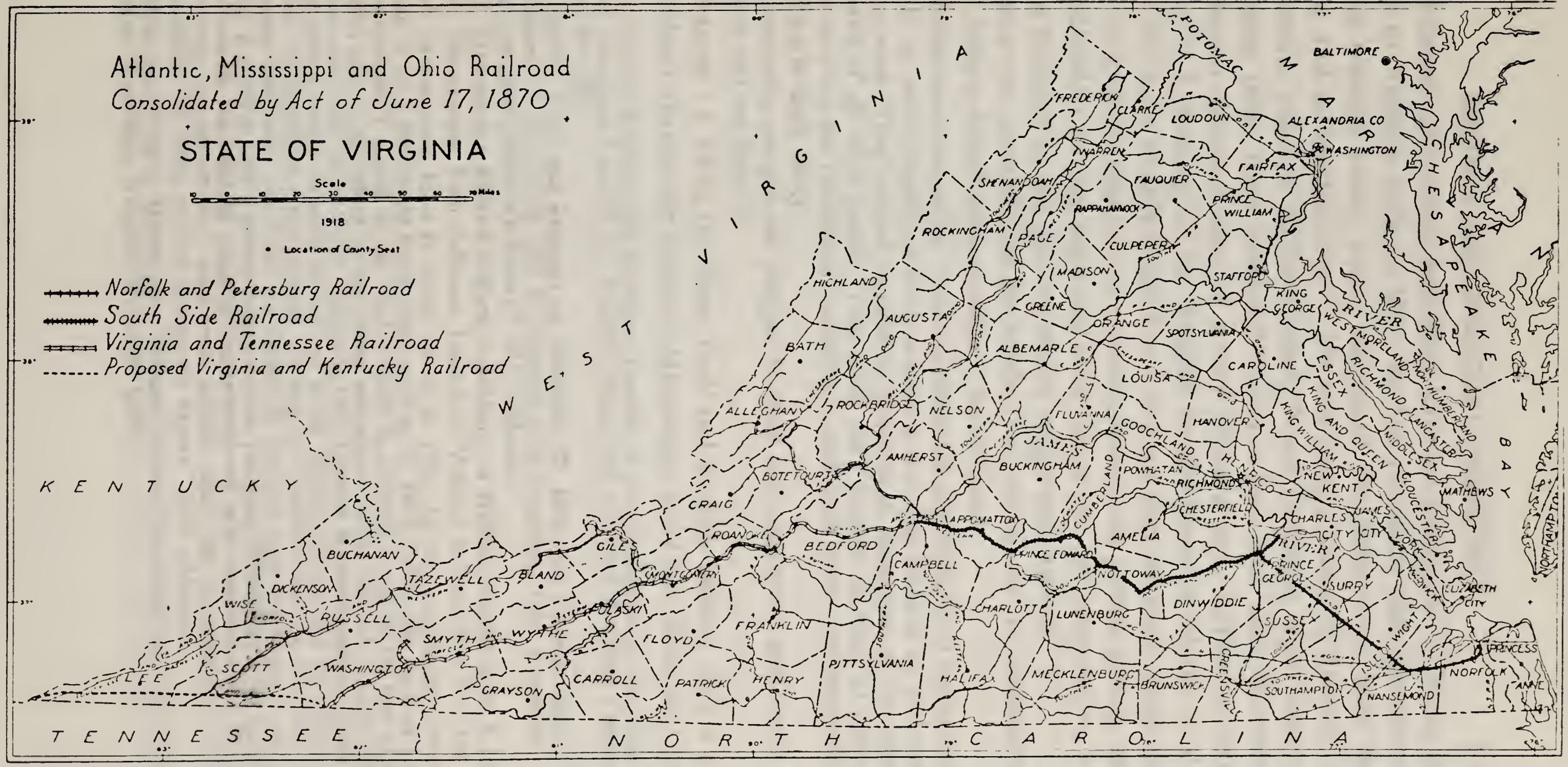
Scale

10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 Miles

1918

• Location of County Seat

Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad
South Side Railroad
Virginia and Tennessee Railroad
Proposed Virginia and Kentucky Railroad



of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company.[114] When he returned to Virginia early in 1876, he felt confident that agreements had been reached which would safeguard the interests of both the company and its bondholders.[115] He was congratulated by friends on the successful outcome of his mission,[116] and Collinson wrote him an encouraging letter from London.[117] Only a few days later, however, he received a communication of a very different sort. Collinson, after referring to a meeting of the English bondholders on March 4, declared, "We have already notified to [sic] you that we must resign the Agency of your Company, as we cannot endorse its present policy, and the Bondholders having expressed their desire for our cooperation, we beg now to notify to you that we hereby resign such agency."[118]

Mahone was astounded at the sudden turn of affairs. In response to a letter from a friend on this subject, he declared:

> The British went back on us. I made a settlement with them of all our matters, and while we were earnestly at work to carry it out, they broke it up and went secretly at work. They propose to seize the property in derogation of the rights and interest of all other parties. They cooly [sic] propose to wipe all interest but their own and the Divisional Bondholders, and these latter, they would hold as Creditors in their mercy.
>
> My remaining energies are pledged to resist their attempt at such worry to our people and our State.[119]

On March 14, 1876, the New York and English brokers filed a bill of complaint against the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Com-

114 *Ibid.* Printed Letters, John Collinson, London, to the bondholders of the Consolidated Mortgage Loan of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, Sept. 28, 1875.

115 A Funding Deed was executed on December 27, 1875, and Collinson signed an agreement on January 18, 1876, to coöperate in its execution. *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "A Reply to John Collinson's Report," XIX, addenda.

116 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Richard Pollard, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, Feb. 8, 1876.

117 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John Collinson, London, to William Mahone, Feb. 22, 1876.

118 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, March 6, 1876. In this connection Collinson wrote to the Consolidated bondholders on Aug. 17, 1876, "When the Funding Deed was executed I agreed to aid the Company in carrying it out to the best of my ability, and an agreement to this effect was signed on the 18th of January, 1876, but so soon after as the 1st of February, 1876, General Mahone wrote his letter of repudiation, which virtually put an end to the funding scheme and the object for which my assistance was promised. So long as I believed that the Company was keeping faith with you, I did my utmost to preserve your confidence in it; but when it acted in such a manner as to convince you, your Committee, your Counsel, and myself, that reliance could no longer be placed in its undertakings, I adopted the only course which I considered proper under the circumstances." *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "A Reply to John Collinson's Report," XIX, addenda.

119 *Riddleberger Papers.* Manuscripts, William Mahone, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, Woodstock, Virginia, March 26, 1876.

pany, demanding the appointment of a receiver.[120] Such a course of action was vigorously opposed by the City Council of Norfolk in its meeting on March 29, but resolutions were adopted at the same time to the effect "That if the honorable Court determines that a Receiver shall be appointed, the City of Norfolk respectfully asks, through its Attorney and associate counsel, the appointment of General William Mahone as Receiver of said road."[121] There can be little doubt but that Mahone desired to be appointed a receiver on the part of the railroad company.[122] When he learned, however, that the English bondholders opposed his appointment, he abandoned his efforts in that direction.[123]

On May 1 Collinson arrived in the United States to represent the interests of the English bondholders.[124] A suit was instituted in the Circuit Court of the United States for the Eastern and Western Districts of Virginia, Fourth Judicial District, over which Judge Hugh L. Bond presided.[125] On June 6, Judge Bond appointed Charles L. Perkins of New York, and Major Henry Fink of Lynchburg, as receivers on the part of the bondholders and the railroad company.[126] One week later, on June 13, the railroad was formally turned over to the receivers.[127]

Under date of August 17, 1876, Collinson made a report to the consolidated bondholders regarding the condition of the Atlantic, Missis-

120 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 182.

121 Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* p. 166.

122 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, N. L. McCready, New York, to William Mahone, Apr. 3, 1876; Henry Fink, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, May 12, 1876. There seems to be little evidence in support of the statement that Mahone "declined to become one of the receivers (though urged to do so), as he could not consent to be a beneficiary of adverse action against his corporation and thus seem at least, to consent to that action for his own aggrandizement." Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 17, 18.

123 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "A Reply to John Collinson's Report." XLVII, XLVIII, addenda.

124 *Ibid.*

125 The case was entitled, "Francis Skiddy, Wm. Butler Duncan and Samuel L. M. Barlow, Trustees, against the Atlantic, Mississippi & Ohio R. R. Company." *Personal Papers.* Frank Helvestine, Roanoke, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 16, 1932.

126 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "A Reply to John Collinson's Report," XXI, addenda. It has been suggested that the appointment of Fink and Perkins as receivers was a compromise between the lawyers of Mahone and those of the bondholders. *Ibid.* Manuscripts, H. H. Walker, New York City, to William Mahone, June 8, 1876. Henry Fink was general superintendent of the A. M. & O. Railroad at this time. Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1876-1877,* p. 710.

127 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "A Reply to John Collinson's Report," XXII, addenda. Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1877-1878,* p. 350.

sippi and Ohio Railroad.[128] It was a severe arraignment of the organization which he had formerly represented and contained charges of the "corrupt and wasteful management of the Company."[129] Mahone's reply to the report appeared on January 29, 1877.[130] It was a masterpiece of argument and invective and clearly exposed the fallacy of Collinson's statements.[131] In connection with its publication, Mahone wrote:

> Years ago, I foresaw that the fortunes, if not the very life, of the three roads now constituting the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio, depended upon the unification of their managements, by some form of consolidation; that it was by such means, efficiency and effect was to be given to that statesmanship in which the homogeneous system they composed had been founded. To the accomplishment of that result, and to make it a success, I have devoted the best years of my life, believing that there was no other field of development which promised even to compare with this, in the great and lasting benefits which it would confer upon my native State. . . .
>
> From the time Mr. Collinson's connection with the Company began, it would have been difficult for the most trusted agent to have been furnished with more complete and continuous information as to the financial affairs of the Company and its operations. . . .
>
> Mr. Collinson, during all this time, fully endorsed the management and approved the conduct of the Company, and these he now undertakes to malign. . . . He has deliberately manufactured a libel for the purpose of magnifying his services and defending the infamous conduct of which he stands self-condemned, while he attempts to effect a conspiracy on this side for the betrayal of the interests whose trust he had induced to be conferred upon him.
>
> It would have been more agreeable to me to have passed by such a perfidious creature with the scorn which he deserves, and but for the position with which he has been dignified by a small number of the Consolidated Bondholders, his utterances would have been treated with that silent contempt which he, the person, could only incite.[132]

Mahone's reply was issued in pamphlet form and distributed to those who desired copies of it.[133] Many letters of congratulation were received in return, similar to the following:

> I have carefully read your reply to the "Bloody Englishman" and to say that you are not only tight on him but "binding," but feebly expresses the state of the case. I was delighted with it, not only on account of the manner in which you *salted* the *sores* of the Bloated English Bondholders, but it places in the

128 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "A Reply to John Collinson's Report," XIX-XXXIII, addenda.

129 *Ibid.*, XIX, addenda.

130 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

131 *Ibid.*, pp. 3-50.

132 *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 50.

133 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, March 1, 1877.

hands of your friends in Va. a weapon that is equal to a two-edged sword. I know your time is too valuable to be reading long epistles, so permit me to offer you my congratulations and to express my great gratification at your triumphant vindication.[134]

When the case of "Francis Skiddy, Wm. Butler Duncan and Samuel L. M. Barlow, Trustees, against the Atlantic, Mississippi & Ohio Railroad Company" came to be argued in the courts a sensational scene ensued. This has been described by H. T. Wickham, a local counsel of the firm of Shipman, Barlow, La Roque & MacFarland, who writes:

MacFarland opened for the plaintiffs and made a very strong speech, concluding, just before he sat down, by taking up the answer which was signed by Gen. Mahone, as the president of the A. M. & O., and comparing the lamentations in the answer to the tears and lamentations of Dido when she was abandoned by Aeneas. I was in court. MacFarland took his seat. Judge Robinson, a very famous Virginia lawyer, who represented the railroad, instantly arose and opened his argument with a very classical allusion. He said that Mr. MacFarland's classical allusion to Aeneas and Dido would have been much more appropriate had he followed with what happened, and if he had charged, as the fact was, that the trusted pilot of Aeneas, Palinurus, had intentionally run his ships upon the rocks, as Collinson, the trusted pilot of Mahone, had wrecked the financial ship of the A. M. & O. This, as you may imagine, created quite a sensation.[135]

There is little question but that the Atlantic, Mississisppi and Ohio Railroad could have survived the period of depression following the panic of 1873 had Mahone been able to retain the support of the English bondholders. In the midst of financial difficulty, however, he was abandoned by the English agent of the company who in turn, alienated the confidence of the consolidated bondholders. The northern railroad interests welcomed the opportunity to align themselves with Collinson against the man who had so resolutely opposed them in the past. And even in Virginia the reactionary forces and rival interests joined the conspiracy against Mahone and the railroad enterprise which he represented.[136]

The combination against Mahone was too powerful to be frustrated. He reluctantly consented to the appointment of receivers upon the promise "that the surplus earnings of the road should be first applied to the payment of arrears due for labor, materials and supplies and then to the payment of the money borrowed from the banks—making, however, no provision, nor stipulation, for the payment of the money

134 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Peter J. Otey, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, March 5, 1877.
135 *Personal Papers.* H. T. Wickham, Richmond, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 10, 1932.
136 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 17.

due to himself."[137] While the railroad was in the hands of the receivers[138] he exerted every possible effort against the proceedings of the Federal Court for the sale of the road.[139] On May 8, 1880, however, a decree of foreclosure and sale was granted.[140] Mahone thereupon made efforts to form a company to buy the road or to advance money to redeem it, but his plans were thwarted before the day of the sale.[141] On February 10, 1881, the roads and property of the company were sold to Clarence H. Clarke for $8,605,000.00, subject to liens and claims which made the entire cost approximately $15,500,000.00.[142] The sale of the railroad was confirmed on April 4, and its purchasers were designated the "Norfolk and Western Railroad Company."[143] This new company was officially organized on May 3, 1881.[144]

Mahone's interest in the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad remained steadfast to the end and his prestige as the State's leading railroad man enabled him to have a definite part in arranging the terms of sale. These terms may be summarized as follows: (1) That the consolidated line from Norfolk to Bristol should be maintained as an unbroken, continuous line, and operated for the interests of Virginia, her cities and her people.[145] (2) That all the stockholders should have the same number of shares in the new company that they held in the old organization.[146] (3) That all the claims for material, supplies and labor

137 *Ibid.*, p. 18. The first annual report of the receivers of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad for the period extending from June 13, 1876, to June 20, 1877, "shows that they had paid an account of salaries and wages long past due to officers and employees, the sum of $90,000, leaving the amount unpaid $111,218." Helvestine, "The Fifth Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 5 (October, 1923), p. 84.

138 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Receivers' Report, Atlantic, Miss. & Ohio Rail Road Company, covering the period June 13th, 1876, to June 30th, 1877"; "Receivers' Report, Atlantic, Miss. & Ohio Rail Road Company, 1877-'78"; "Receivers' Report, Atlantic, Miss. & Ohio Rail Road Company, 1879-'80"; "Receivers' Final Report, Atlantic, Miss. & Ohio Rail Road Company, 1880-'81."

139 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 18.

140 Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1881,* p. 358.

141 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 18.

142 Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1881,* p. 358; Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1882,* p. 375.

143 Helvestine, "The Fifth Link in the N. & W. Chain," *Norfolk and Western Magazine,* Vol. I, No. 5 (October, 1923), p. 84.

144 Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1881,* p. 358. "The Norfolk and Western Railway is to this day a magnificent monument to Mahone. It has realized his dreams. It follows his right-of-way. The stations he located and named are prosperous little towns and villages. Many of the buildings he planned and constructed are still in use. He was a wise master-builder." Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 183.

145 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 18.

146 *Ibid.*

should be recognized and paid in full, one-half in money and the other half in stock.[147] (4) That all the bondholders, both English and American, should be secured to the full face value of their bonds, with all accrued interest.[148] (5) That the purchasers should pay the State $500,000.00 in cash for her claims against the railroad.[149]

Referring to his railroad activities Mahone once wrote, "It was a work well worthy of any man's ambition; it formed the highest, I may say the sole, aim of my own."[150] As a surveyor, a civil engineer, a railroad president, and a consolidator of railroads Mahone devoted himself wholeheartedly to the interests of the people for whom he labored and the State in which he lived. When the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad finally passed out of his hands he was able to make terms with the purchasers which were the more remarkable in view of the fact that they were made when the road was in the hands of receivers and after the court had pronounced a decree of sale "*which extinguished forever every right and power of the company and its president; every interest and claim of the stockholders; every demand of all who had furnished material, supplies and labor; and every possible lien of the State.*"[151] It was indeed "a great work, done by a great man, in a great emergency."[152]

147 This agreement was more than fulfilled by the payment of all these claims in cash. *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19.

148 As a result of this agreement the English bondholders received "*par* and accrued interest at 7 per cent for bonds upon which they had paid only 69 cents on the dollar! and the home bondholder an unclouded security for his claim." *Ibid.*, p. 19.

149 *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 41. Of this amount the State Legislature set aside $100,000.00 for the construction of the Colored Normal and Collegiate Institute at Petersburg, and $400.000.00 was applied to the public school fund of the State. Squires, *Land of Decision,* pp. 183, 184.

150 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "A Reply to John Collinson's Report," p. 50.

151 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 19.

152 *Ibid.*

CHAPTER VI: THE POLITICAL ASPIRANT

> "But your aspiration is to be Governor, and to be Governor that you may control the internal improvement *policy & system* of the State. . . . But how are you going to be Governor? My original view holds good—by becoming the Leader of a *new party* in the *State* to act in accord with the administration of Hayes. His administration is going to be friendly. . . . As it is, I doubt if you can come to the front in our Party as at present organized. You have been the foremost man in the State in *power*. But you have met a defeat. That makes a great difference."—Quoted from a letter of James G. Holladay to Mahone, March 16, 1877.

IN 1869 Mahone favored the election of Gilbert C. Walker as Governor of Virginia, and because of the tremendous influence which he exerted was responsible in a large measure for the success of his campaign. The newly elected governor realized his indebtedness to the "railroad king" and desired his coöperation in putting the "new State" machinery into operation.[1] Although he did not propose "to run his office exclusively in the interest of 'Consolidation',"[2] nevertheless, he readily approved Mahone's Railroad Bill of June, 1870, in view of its overwhelming adoption by the Senate and the House.

The close relationship between business and politics—between the railroads and the Legislature—made it almost imperative that Mahone should interest himself in political affairs. His predominant, if not his sole, interest was in the successful consummation of his railroad policy, but he realized that this depended to a large extent on the political influence which he could exert. One of his friends from southwestern Virginia urged him to exercise the greatest possible care in the formation of political alliances, and expressed the hope that his splendid judgment, which had been so conspicuous on previous occasions, would enable him "to steer clear of the quicksand, and slippery places in the deceptive walks of politics."[3] Another friend declared that his true policy was "to make consolidation prove itself while *you*", he wrote,

1 *Mahone Collection*. Manuscripts, W. E. M. Wood, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, Jan. 27, 1870.

2 *Ibid*. Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Oct. 4, 1869.

3 *Ibid*. Manuscripts, Abram Fulkerson, Goodson, Virginia, to William Mahone, Oct. 4, 1869.

"ad interim, steer clear of all political entanglements, *for other people,* unless it is a clear *dead open & shut* that you must win & can't lose."[4]

At any rate the advantages of Consolidation must be so continually pressed & kept prominently before the people, that they shall come not only to *believe,* but to *feel,* that it is the salvation of the Republic. Then there will be another point gained—establish this fact & the other will follow that the originator is the *Salvator,* and as such Gubernatorial honours will be at his Command.[5]

The General Assembly which convened in Richmond in the fall of 1870 was regarded by many as "Virginia's worst Legislature."[6] On March 28, 1871, it passed the bill, already referred to, which provided for the sale of the State's interest in the railroads at a sacrifice. This reprehensible legislation was followed by the passage of the notorious Funding Act on March 30.[7] Concerning the vote in the House, R. F. Walker wrote to Mahone:

The funding bill passed the House last night—getting 78 votes—*every Radical in the House voting for it!* They were *bought night before last!* Senator Hamlet told me yesterday that Jay Cooke and *Gilbert C. Walker* were the heaviest jobbers, and will make thousands of dollars. . . . Walter Wood denounced the Bill in one of his most eloquent speeches—saying that if the Bill passed the people would be sure to repudiate the whole debt. And I trust they may do it—rather than the *sharks* alluded to shall get rich upon the poor people of the State.[8]

Walker's support of these two bills gave weight to the accusation that "the handsome governor" had abandoned a large part of his constituency and turned over to the Bourbon, or ultra-conservative element, in the State.[9] Consequently, Mahone came to repose less and less confidence in Walker, and his estrangement from the governor grew ever wider.[10]

In 1871 a movement known as the "New Departure" had its origin. It was an effort to place the Democratic party "upon the platform of negro suffrage, negro citizenship and negro equality."[11] Many Southerners regarded these questions as already settled, and hence branded them as dead issues. On this point one of Mahone's allies wrote to him:

4 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, S. Bassett French to William Mahone, 1870(?).
5 *Ibid.*
6 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John M. Robinson, New York, to William Mahone, March 25, 1871.
7 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 163.
8 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, March 29, 1871.
9 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, III, 2.
10 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 32.
11 *Shenandoah Democrat,* July 6, 1871.

The New Departure I do *not* regard as a Side-Issue. It is essential to us on the Southside that we should gracefully acquiesce in accomplished facts. We ought to control a large part of the negro vote, on the line of our Southside improvements, by acknowledging their legal status, and by appealing to them to stand by us, as Virginians born & resident—tho' black.[12]

In reply to this letter Mahone wrote, "We must battle for results & not for dead issues. And as you suggest it is of great importance to our section of the State that the negro and his suffrage should be looked to by us."[13]

In the summer of 1871 Mahone displayed an increasing interest in the political affairs of the State.[14] He desired the election of a Legislature which would fairly represent the will of the people and not one which would be dominated by the northern railroad interests.[15] On August 30 the Conservation Convention assembled at Richmond. The ante-bellum leaders, who no longer suffered political proscription, began to make their power felt once again. In the November election the Conservatives increased their majority in the House by fifteen members and in the Senate by six. The number of negroes in the House was reduced from twenty-one to fourteen, and in the Senate from six to three.[16]

With the interests of his railroad at heart Mahone and his friends sought to exercise a predominant influence in the Legislature which convened on December 6, 1871.[17] They realized the desirability of gaining control of the clerkships—with the Speaker—but were unable to achieve their objectives completely.

On April 2, 1872, French wrote to Mahone, "If *we* could have only one good *leader* in the House we would have swept the platter—de-

12 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Charles Sharp, Norfolk, to William Mahone, July 31, 1871.

13 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Lynchburg, to Charles Sharp, Aug. 1, 1871.

14 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, J. R. Fisher, Richmond, to R. F. Walker, July 27, 1871; R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Sept. 28, 1871.

15 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Charles Sharp, Norfolk, to William Mahone, July 31, 1871. In response to Sharp's letter regarding the election of "a proper Legislature," Mahone wrote, "With the selection of the Legislature I apprehend that the doings of the Convention to be held in Richd. 30. inst. will exercise a potential interest. It certainly may be made to do so—and to prevent those who would pack a legislature upon us favorable to the miserable schemes of adventurers, such as the C. & O. and Pa. Central—the Walters & Bridgers—Branch with the latter, as well as the purposes of the Balt. & Ohio with reference to the S. W. territory, it is essential that our best & boldest men should attend the Convention." *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Lynchburg, to Charles Sharp, Aug. 1, 1871.

16 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 164, 165.

17 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, S. Bassett French to William Mahone, Nov. 3, 1871.

lay—sloth—& ignorance of parliamentary tactics have failed us in attaining *all* we desired. Still we should not complain; we have had a *fair* meal, even if we did not get a dessert."[18] Later in the month he reminded Mahone that all of the positive legislation which he had demanded had been obtained, that most of the obnoxious features had been defeated, and that any not wholly palatable provisions which had been adopted were comparatively trifling.[19]

In the Presidential election of 1872 General Grant won a decisive victory over Horace Greeley.[20] In Virginia, however, the contest was very close, and for a number of days the result was uncertain. When the votes were finally tabulated it was found that Grant had won by a small majority.[21] The outcome of the election, however, was due more to the apathy of the Conservatives than the strength of the Radicals. The *Shenandoah Democrat* described it as a "Conservative defeat by Conservatives, but by no means a Radical victory."[22]

As early as August, 1872, Mahone and his friends began to think of a successor to Governor Walker.[23] There were unmistakable evidences that Withers, who had been induced to withdraw from the gubernatorial race in 1869 after the nomination of a "compromise" candidate, would be a strong contender again in 1873. He was still *persona non grata* to Mahone because of his hostility to the latter's railroad policies. Therefore, S. Bassett French only echoed Mahone's sentiments when he wrote, "We must defeat Withers and the question is, not *whom we prefer,* but *whom* can we nominate *over him.* I had almost as soon see Walker in the Cabinet as Withers in the Gubernatorial chair."[24]

Mahone's reason for delving into politics was grounded on his firm conviction that "the pass to the situation" lay in "the Executive and Legislative power."[25] Regarding it as a question of independence on the

18 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, April 2, 1872.

19 *Ibid.,* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, April 22, 1872.

20 Grant received 3,597,132 votes to 2,834,125 for Greeley. He received 286 of the 352 electoral votes. Edward Stanwood, *A History of Presidential Elections,* Boston and New York, 1884 (fourth edition), pp. 297, 299.

21 In Virginia Grant received 93,468 votes to 91,654 for Greeley. His majority, therefore, was only 1,814. Virginia's eleven electoral votes were given to Grant. *Ibid.*

22 *Shenandoah Democrat,* Nov. 21, 1872.

23 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, S. Bassett French to William Mahone, Aug. 9, 1872.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Lynchburg, to Judge W. W. Crump, Richmond, Apr. 24, 1873.

one hand as against subjugation on the other he determined to exercise his entire influence toward the election of "proper" men for these important positions. He was particularly eager to defeat the "Bucktails," or the Pennsylvania Railroad interests, in their efforts to increase their holdings in Virginia.[26] In line with this policy he circulated hundreds of copies of the *Bucktail Swindle* throughout the State to expose the frauds in connection with the purchase of the Richmond and Danville Railroad.[27]

General James Lawson Kemper was recognized as one of the outstanding candidates for the gubernatorial nomination in 1873. Prior to the War he served for ten years in the Virginia Legislature, and during the war he rose from the rank of colonel to major general.[28] He enjoyed the confidence of the old Democratic party and at the same time was "a representative man of young America."[29] Another factor in his favor, from Mahone's viewpoint, was that he was "uncompromisingly Anti-Walker."[30] The only consideration, therefore, which remained in Mahone's mind regarding his eligibility for the office was his attitude on the railroad question. Information on this point came to Mahone from R. F. Walker, one of his most trusted political informants:

> Gen. Kemper called in to see me yesterday. He evidently wants to be Governor, but "wants the office to seek him." I *felt* him, of course, in a quiet way, with reference to the "Bucktails," etc. He declared if he should be elected, he would come here "untrammeled, and with no man's collar about his neck!!" He is too etherial. I weighed him, and he is *wanting!* I would not trust him. Judge Staples has had several conversations with me. He is "all right," and the best man, probably, we could put in the field.[31]

Doubtless this communication had considerable weight in influencing Mahone to communicate with Judge Waller R. Staples regarding the gubernatorial nomination. In response, Judge Staples advanced several

26 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to Judge Waller R. Staples, June 2, 1873. *Ibid.* Manuscripts, W. H. Taylor, Norfolk, to William Mahone, June 18, 1873.

27 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Apr. 28, 1873. The *Shenandoah Democrat,* April 17, 1873, decried the effort on the part of railroad magnates in Virginia to direct the politics of the State. It declared that "Mahone, Garrett, Barbour, Wynne, Huntington, Buford, Roberts, Robinson, Ragland, and their satellites are no more to be trusted in Virginia politics than are Tom Scott and his, in Pennsylvania."

28 *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* V, 454.

29 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, S. Bassett French to William Mahone, Aug. 9, 1872.

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Apr. 12, 1873.

reasons why he hesitated to become a candidate in 1873.[32] He added, "You have great influence in the state—your will & counsel are justly listened to with respect by many, very many persons. You owe it to yourself *and to them in any event* to exert that influence for the success and ascendancy of the Conservative party—I am satisfied you will be found 'right side up all the time.' "[33] Mahone was greatly distressed by Staples' answer in view of the "impending crisis" which threatened the State, and asked him if he would refuse the nomination in case it should be given him "with great unanimity."[34] To this challenge the Judge responded that "if the representative men of Va. should make the call 'with great unanimity' then the call must be obeyed whatever may be the sacrifice or the consequence."[35]

In view of Staples' reluctance to become a gubernatorial candidate, General Kemper once again appeared as the best prospect for the position. Kemper was reported to have written a letter suggesting Mahone as the most appropriate person for governor, and this, in itself, indicated that he would be willing to coöperate with him.[36] In this connection "Dick" Walker made a characteristic comment:

> If Kemper is all right, with him we could make a strong fight. There is a great deal of "fuss and fury," i.e.—*humbug*—about him. At the battle of Seven Pines, in his shirt-sleeves, John M. Daniel said he heard him exclaim, with his crescent-shaped sword in hand, "Come on, my bloody heroes! Charge!! Send these Devils to Hell!!! Such a man is strong always before the unwashed, and if he is right, we can easily win with him, and Jim Walker for Lieutenant Governor.[37]

A few days after receiving this message General Mahone wrote to Judge Staples:

> I have taken pains to be advised, that you are about the only person, outside of the army, that can be nominated. The Bucktails, we are advised, are earnestly at work, not of his knowledge would I say, for Col. Withers, & after, Ex-Gov. Smith. We have but recently ascertained that they are hostile to Kemper, and

32 He expressed a reluctance because of poor health, because he believed he could secure the nomination only after considerable opposition and bitterness, because he had no aspiration for the office and because he feared that his position on the Funding Bill might give the impression that he had written a judicial opinion for political popularity. *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Waller R. Staples, Christiansburg, to William Mahone, May 12, 1873.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to Waller R. Staples, May 15, 1873.

35 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Waller R. Staples, Christiansburg, to William Mahone, May 27, 1873.

36 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, May 26, 1873.

37 *Ibid.*

Kemper, I tell you confidentially, is as much opposed to these devils and all their various schemes as you or I. Then it would seem that our best hope of success against these conspirators would designate Genl. Kemper, Genl. J. A. Walker & Genl. Williams of the Valley. This information to you, for you have, and are entitled to our every confidence because you can & will, I hope, help us all you can.[38]

In addition to Kemper and Staples, several other men were mentioned in connection with the Conservative gubernatorial nomination. One of these was Henry A. Wise who had served as Governor of Virginia from 1856 to 1860. He announced his willingness to run as an Independent candidate in case either the Republicans or Conservatives failed to make a nomination.[39] At one time it was even suggested that he might run for governor in conjunction with a Republican lieutenant governor and a Conservative Independent attorney general.[40] Neither the Republicans nor the Conservatives, however, displayed any enthusiasm over the prospect of an Independent candidate and so the proposal came to naught. "Dick" Walker regarded Wise as "a very dangerous man, *when he is not known.*"[41]

Another candidate for the nomination was John Goode of Virginia. He had been closely associated with Mahone in the struggle for Southside consolidation and declared himself unalterably opposed to the northern railroad interests. Goode was "red-hot to be Governor" and optimistic over the prospect.[42] His belief was that Kemper and Withers would be dropped and that all the delegates would unite on him.[43] It was understood that Goode was not Mahone's preference for the position but it was believed that Mahone would support him in case "his friends *could secure the nomination* for him."[44]

General Robert E. Withers, however, was Kemper's most formidable opponent. His withdrawal from the race in 1869 made him all the more eager for victory in 1873. He probably felt, too, that the Con-

38 Ibid. Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to Waller R. Staples, June 2, 1873. The same day Mahone wrote to another party, "I have reason to know that General Kemper is for our every interest & for success, the man. This I say to you most confidentially, but in order that you may shape your action advisedly." *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to F. McMullin, Marion, Virginia, June 2, 1873.

39 *Shenandoah Democrat,* June 12, 1873. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, May 26, 1873.

40 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, June 9, 1873.

41 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, May 26, 1873.

42 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, July 5, 1873.

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, W. H. Taylor, Norfolk, to William Mahone, June 18, 1873.

servatives were under somewhat of an obligation at this time to select him as their standard-bearer. Withers realized, however, that Mahone stood in the way of his nomination, and he declared to a friend that he would beat Mahone or die in the attempt.[45] The friends of Withers were very sanguine regarding his nomination. One of them declared that everything had been arranged in Petersburg for "carrying things through," and that Withers would be nominated on the first ballot.[46]

During July, 1873, the Conservative candidates were busily engaged in an effort to increase their strength before the nominating convention in August. Staples and Wise were no longer serious contenders but there was still considerable talk in favor of Goode.[47] Withers visited several counties to rally his supporters, and Governor Walker did some electioneering in the Southwest in his behalf.[48] Kemper felt very much encouraged by the outlook, but was somewhat fearful that the friends of the opposition candidates might unite to bring about his defeat.[49] On July 10 he wrote to R. F. Walker, "I am just as cool as the centre seed of a cucumber about all that is going on, seeking nothing for myself, prepared to resist any attempt at foul play against my friends and ready to draw the sword in their behalf against all their enemies—if required to lead in the fray."[50]

On August 6 the Conservative Convention assembled in Richmond.[51] Mahone's earnest efforts in the preliminary canvass were rewarded by Kemper's nomination for the governorship.[52] R. E. Withers, his leading opponent, was nominated for lieutenant governor, and Raleigh T. Daniel for attorney general.[53] Following the convention the Conservative party began an active campaign in behalf of its candidates. The State executive committee was reported to be "hard at work every day, sending out documents and organizing."[54] Mahone and his friends

45 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, July 1, 1873.

46 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, June 26, 1873.

47 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, J. L. Kemper, Madison Court House, Virginia, to R. F. Walker, July 10, 1873; J. D. Proctor, Norfolk, to William Mahone, Aug. 1, 1873.

48 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, July 12, 1873.

49 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, J. L. Kemper, Madison Court House, Virginia, to R. F. Walker, July 10, 1873.

50 *Ibid.*

51 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 182.

52 On July 29, Stratham had written to Mahone, "I suppose the child is born, and will be christened the 6th—*Kemper.*" *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts. C. W. Stratham, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, July 29, 1873.

53 *Shenandoah Democrat,* Aug. 14, 1873.

54 Nathaniel B. Meade was made chairman of the State executive committee and J. R. Fisher served as secretary. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Aug. 27, 1873.

aided the campaign in every possible way, including the liberal contribution of funds.[55]

On July 30 Robert W. Hughes had been nominated for the governorship by the Republican party at its convention in Lynchburg.[56] At the same time C. P. Ramsdell was nominated for lieutenant governor, and Judge David Fultz for attorney general.[57] Hughes, a native Virginian, was one of the first among the old citizens of Virginia to attach himself to the Republican party at the close of the war.[58] As a firm supporter of Southside consolidation he had been closely associated with Mahone. In 1873 he declared that he could never "go back" on Mahone or be untrue to his southwestern friends.[59] Mahone, in return, was disposed to encourage Hughes in so far as such a course of action appeared expedient.[60] Walker sensed the situation when he wrote the General, "*Give Hughes every show you can.* He is our friend, even if we can't vote for him, under the circumstances."[61]

An interesting historiette of the campaign of 1873 is found in a letter from Kemper to Nathaniel B. Meade, chairman of the State executive committee. It read, in part:

> Our canvass of the Southwest is a splendid success thus far. The popular interest is at white heat. . . . The notes which reach me from the East are all dead cold. I can find no evidence of any general organization of our forces, of

55 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, N. B. Meade, Richmond, to William Mahone, Aug. 27, 1873. This note acknowledged the receipt of $1,000 from Mahone "for the purposes of the canvass." Three liberal contributors to the campaign were General Mahone, Major John M. Robinson and Commodore N. L. McCready. These men were business associates in the Marine Bank of Norfolk and were "the opulent magnates of all the railroad and steamboat lines running to and from this city." Norfolk *Journal,* June 16, 1872. A letter to Mahone dated Oct. 24, 1873, stated, "I write Mr. McCready and Jno. M. R. today to each send me check for $2,000 as some will be wanted for *lubricating* purposes over the river. You please *ditto.*" *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, George W. Grice, Portsmouth, to William Mahone, Oct. 24, 1873. It was at this time, too that Major Robinson and General Mahone spent $2,500 in order to control the editorial policy of the *Evening State Journal* in support of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio, and the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac during the approaching session of the Legislature. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John M. Robinson, Baltimore, to William Mahone, Aug. 16, Sept. 9, 1873.

56 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 181.

57 *Shenandoah Democrat,* Aug. 7, 1873.

58 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Papers showing the political course of R. W. Hughes, the Republican candidate for Governor, before and since the fall of the Southern Confederacy in 1865; prefixed by a biographical sketch." Richmond, 1873, pp. 3, 5. *Personal Papers.* Robert M. Hughes, Natural Bridge, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Sept. 5, 1930.

59 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, July 10, 1873.

60 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, June 9, 27, 1873.

61 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, June 26, 1873.

any extended cooperation of our leading men—nothing like an uprising of the conservatives of all sections. . . . General over-confidence and general inaction are threatening our ruin. Meantime the enemy are doing ten times as much and doing it ten times as well as we. . . . Our best canvassers of every Senatorial district and county must at once be set to work and simultaneously. Bocock, Flournoy, Tucker, Stuart, Goode, and all such must at once, now, immediately, be sent out and kept out in company with good reporters to publish the effect of their speeches. There must be no pause anywhere. You don't control one-tenth of the money which the enemy are spending in this canvass. Our party seem to be looking to one man or to one or two interests to bear the whole expense of our canvass. Any such reliance is unreasonable, and must fail. In 1869 ten men in Petersburg were in five minutes induced to pay down $5,000 to carry that city and it was carried. How easy now to get 100 men to plank up $50,000 to meet this emergency?[62]

A letter from Judge Crump to Mahone in October, 1873, throws additional light on the campaign. The Judge wrote:

Remember me most cordially to Kemper. I feel not the slightest uneasiness about his election. If the signs of the times mean anything, he will get a larger majority than Walker got by thousands.

I don't think Hughes will approach Wells' vote. I have never seen the negroes more apathetic & I believe the Carpet-baggers would not be sorry to see Hughes beaten as he represents the Scalawag interest running to show that a native is the man for success. There has always been a feud between the two by which I am sure we shall profit.[63]

In the November election Crump's prophecy was fulfilled in the election of Kemper by a majority "in excess of that given for Walker in 1869."[64] Kemper's victory was due in a large measure to Mahone's energetic efforts, as is indicated in the following letter to Mahone:[65]

62 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, J. L. Kemper, Glade Spring, Virginia, to N. B. Meade, Sept. 14, 1873.

63 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, W. W. Crump, Richmond, to William Mahone, Oct. 21, 1873. On the day this letter was written Governor Walker addressed a Conservative rally at Norfolk in support of Kemper and Withers. Burton, *History of Norfolk, Virginia,* pp. 152, 153.

64 *Shenandoah Democrat,* Nov. 13, 1873. The Conservatives also won a definite victory in the election of members to the General Assembly. Of the 132 members in the House of Delegates, 99 were Conservatives and 33 Republicans; and of the 42 Senators, 33 were Conservatives, and 9 Republicans. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 170.

65 Mahone's efforts in behalf of a candidate generally extended throughout a campaign and until sundown on election day. He was credited with various types of strategy in order to control the negro vote and aid the Conservative cause. One of these was the use of tissue ballots by Conservative voters. These ballots were so thin that a number of them could be used in place of a single ballot of the usual thickness. When tissue ballots were used, it often happened that the number of votes cast in an election outnumbered those who were registered to vote. This made it necessary to reduce the votes to the number of registered voters. A man was selected for this purpose and carefully blindfolded. Being in sympathy with

Kemper complains that you do not give him the benefit of y[ou]r counsel. He recognizes what he owes to your influence and claims that as by y[ou]r help he is the Govr. elect that now he shall have your aid to sustain his administration. He wants you to speak out—frankly, freely.[66]

As a matter of fact Mahone was very much gratified by the election of Kemper and desired to coöperate with him in every way possible. He was interested, too, in the convening of the General Assembly and the subsequent election of a United States Senator to succeed John F. Lewis. The panic of 1873, however, had created a crisis in the management of his railroad which demanded his full attention and made him appear indifferent to political matters for several months following Kemper's election as governor.[67]

The four-year period which followed was one of the most painful and difficult in the history of the State. It was marked by the collapse of credit, the stagnation of industry, the prohibitive price of money and the general depression.[68] During the early part of 1874 Mahone was so fully occupied with the financial problems of his railroad that he found little time for political matters. Later in the year, however, he served as chairman of the Conservative State Committee for the Fourth Congressional District.[69] Judging by his correspondence he was strongly opposed to the election of ex-Governor Walker to Congress from the Third District.[70] On the other hand, he was on excellent terms with

the Conservatives he made it a point to withdraw none of the tissue ballots. As a result of this chicanery a large number of the negro ballots were extracted and their vote was correspondingly decreased. Conversations with Senator Carter Glass, Lynchburg, Virginia. Another scheme of Mahone's to lessen the negro vote was made possible by his employment of hundreds of negroes on his railroad. On election day he would send out a train crew of negroes to make repairs on some portion of the track. Their return home would be delayed until late at night, making it impossible for them to take part in the election. Other schemes, as well, were resorted to in order to reduce, or to control, the negro vote. Conversations with Dr. C. S. Dodd, Petersburg, Virginia. *Mahone Collection.* R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, July 1, 1873. These steps were taken by Mahone in a sincere belief that the end justified the means, and that the triumph of the Conservative candidate was essential to the best interests of the State. These methods, open to criticism as they are, were certainly no more objectionable than the use of intimidation and fraud in many other southern states during the same period.

66 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, S. Bassett French to William Mahone, Dec. 6, 1873.

67 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Nov. 14, 21, Dec. 6, 31, 1873.

68 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 182.

69 *Mahone Collection.* Printed Letters, William Mahone, Petersburg, to members of the Conservative State Committee of the Fourth Congressional District, Aug. 18, 1874.

70 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, June 25, July 31, Nov. 4, 1874.

Governor Kemper, and was frequently consulted by him on various questions.[71]

Several amendments to the Constitution were adopted during Kemper's term of office. The House of Delegates was reduced in number from 132 to 100. Provision was made for the General Assembly to meet biennially instead of annually. The General Assembly was given power to provide for the government of cities and towns and the establishment of courts therein. It was likewise empowered to remove disabilities which might be incurred by aiding or participating in duels. Another significant provision was the revival of a poll tax as a requisite for voting.[72]

When Mahone went to England in the interests of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company in the latter part of 1875 his friends kept him informed regarding the political situation at Richmond.[73] His efforts to prevent the reëlection of John W. Johnston to the United States Senate were without success.[74] He maintained friendly relations with Kemper, but the Governor, himself, had many strong political enemies.[75]

When the New York and English brokers filed a complaint against the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, demanding the appointment of a receiver, one of Mahone's friends declared that "whatever may have been the decision of Judges Hughes and Bond, my confidence and that of thousands of *unprejudiced* Virginians in your management of that Corporation—the A. M. & O.—has not been, nor will it be, in the least diminished. . . . . but should the decision be adverse to you, with thousands of your friends, I will contribute my humble aid, to make you our State's Chief Magistrate."[76] And when the railroad was placed in the hands of receivers on June 13, 1876, a friend from Georgia wrote:

> By machinations most vile you are now out of *place,* but not out of power—the power that surely rewards the virtues of an unblemished name, and that

71 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, May 22, 26, 30, Aug. 7, 1874.

72 Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions,* VII, 3901-3903. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 174.

73 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Nov. 8, 1875, Feb. 11, 1876; John S. Wise, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 17, 1876.

74 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 17, 1876. Johnston represented Virginia in the United States Senate from 1869 to 1883.

75 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, June 25, March 1, 1875; James L. Kemper, Richmond, to William Mahone, July 25, Dec. 7, 1876.

76 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, William R. Vaughan, Culpeper, Virginia, to William Mahone, April 8, 1876.

genius and heroic courage in the discharge of every duty, will always attain. That power, I say, is yours and a whole people, not only of Virginia, but of a grateful South will yet acknowledge it.[77]

With the hope of regaining ultimate control of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad Company, Mahone now turned his attention definitely to politics. In former years he had displayed no interest in personal political preferment and had been content to secure the election of men whom he felt were best qualified for office and most likely to support those measures which would contribute to the best interests of Virginia. With the frustration of his railroad schemes, however, the whole matter appeared in a very different light to Mahone. His personal disappointment, as well as the confused and unsatisfactory state of affairs in Virginia, now invited him to seek political position. Friends and admirers encouraged him to seek the gubernatorial nomination,[78] and numerous letters were received from those who offered to assist him in case he should present himself for the office.[79]

One of the most interesting and prophetic of these letters came from James G. Holladay of Portsmouth. He expressed the opinion that the recent inauguration of President Hayes would result in the disintegration of existing parties and the reformation of future parties, and declared that the Republican party was bound to make a radical change in its policy toward the South. He had hoped that Mahone would feel inclined to engage in Federal politics, to take control of the disorganized elements in the State "and give them direction by avowing in advance that the time had come when, if the policy of the incoming administration should be kind and colleatory [sic], the Southern People ought & would meet it half way."[80]

> But your aspiration is to be Governor, and to be Governor that you may control the internal improvement *policy & system* of the State. . . . But how are you going to be Governor? My original view holds good — by becoming the Leader of a *new party* in the *State* to act in accord with the administration of Hayes. His administration is going to be friendly. . . . As it is, I doubt if you can come to the front in our Party as at present organized. You have been the foremost man in the State in *power*. But you have met a defeat. That makes a great difference. . . . Again you have many aspirants of equal position to contend

77 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, T. S. Warren, Atlanta, Georgia, to William Mahone, Aug. 10, 1876.

78 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 34.

79 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, W. D. Hix, Hixburg, Virginia, to William Mahone, Jan. 9, 1877; R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Feb. 25, 1877; William R. Vaughan, Culpeper, to William Mahone, May 8, 1877.

80 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, James G. Holladay, Portsmouth, to William Mahone, March 16, 1877.

with for the prize, that is with *one* Party. Make *your Party* & you will have no competitor. But I have not made these suggestions merely for expediency; they are *right*. The South is the Democratic Party, and it is time that the Party that fought to dissolve the Union and the Party that fought to sustain it should cease to exist & contend such a fight is dangerous to our Free Institutions & imperils the *Peace* of the *Country*.[81]

Mahone's valuable assistance to the Conservative forces in 1869 and again in 1873 might well have warranted his nomination for the governorship at their hands in 1877.[82] Conscious of strong opposition, however, he entertained no vain delusions in the matter. He realized that he could gain the Conservative nomination only by a carefully planned campaign, but was absolutely unwilling, nevertheless, to announce himself as an Independent candidate.[83] His policy, as expressed by one of his lieutenants, was "to still hunt until the day of Convention & then open on them with such a burst as to put them on the defence."[84] Accordingly, his colleagues busied themselves in all sections of the State with the hope of electing favorable delegates to the convention in August. Letters poured in describing the political outlook, and were followed in turn by reports of the election of delegates.[85] Mahone made a careful tabulation of these reports and was able to estimate his strength and that of the other candidates several days in advance of the convention.[86]

As the campaign progressed it became increasingly evident to Mahone and his lieutenants that the other candidates for the nomination were determined to defeat him at all costs. "I have foreseen it all

81 *Ibid.*

82 Asa Rogers, Second Auditor of the State at this time, afterwards declared that the Conservative leaders had all but promised Mahone the gubernatorial nomination in 1877. Conversations with James M. Quicke, Junior, Petersburg, Virginia,

83 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 34, 35.

84 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, Richmond, to William Mahone, May 29, 1877. In this connection Mahone wrote, "The still hunt, is, as you say the true programme now—and we must be sure of our friends and of our count, before we determine to make the issue. I find myself as you may suppose somewhat agged [sic] on in this matter, by an antagonism though perhaps not unnatural, the more calculated to incite one's ambition, because it partakes of a combination of all against one. They would try and complete that distruction [sic] of me which they (part of them) helped Bond to undertake." *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to James Barron Hope, Norfolk, Feb. 15, 1877.

85 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John Letcher, Lexington, Virginia, to S. B. French, May 22, 1877; H. H. Riddleberger, Woodstock, Virginia, to William Mahone, May 27, 1877; W. W. Briggs, Jerusalem, Virginia, to William Mahone, June 19, 1877; Thomas W. Hix, Prospect, Virginia, to William Mahone, July 14, 1877; J. R. Fisher, Washington, District of Columbia, to R. F. Walker, July 25, 1877.

86 *Ibid.* Note Books, I, II.

along," wrote R. F. Walker. "Four pluck one is the game."[87] So united were Mahone's opponents against his nomination that they were for "anybody to beat Mahone."[88] Even the method of electing delegates to the convention, as approved by the sub-committee, was distinctly inimical to Mahone's success. It provided that the people should vote directly for the governor, and that the highest man should nominate all the delegates.[89] "The effect of the plan of the sub-committee," declared Walker, "will be to give Daniel all the opposition to you."[90] Under the plan of the committee there was great rivalry and excitement attendant upon the election of delegates. The meeting at Jerusalem was marked by yelling, swearing and threats of physical violence. One of those in attendance declared that he "had just as soon been at the battle of Malvern Hill, while this excitement was going on."[91]

Two of the most important problems facing Virginians in 1877 were those of the public schools and the public debt. On each of these questions Mahone took a definite stand during the campaign. On June 29 he expressed his views on the public school question in an open letter to Major Alfred R. Courtney, of the school board.[92] "You rightly conjecture," he wrote, "that I am the friend of the public school system of Virginia, and my matured conviction is that it should be effectually nurtured." The children of those who sacrificed their fortunes and lives for the sake of the Commonwealth "have a rightful claim upon popular guardianship," he declared, and "the best interests of the State demand that the large class of persons recently admitted to the privilege of citizenship should receive careful and ample instruction." He pointed out that the State Constitution called for the inauguration of a common-school system by the General Assembly, and specifically stated that the whole receipts from the capitation tax and a certain fixed proportion of other revenues should be set apart for this purpose. Moreover, he affirmed, the will of the people "is unmistakably and irrevocably registered in favor of the free-school system."

> If in a position to determine such questions, I would let the very wheels of government stand still before I would be the instrument, or the quiet observer, of so cruel a wrong to the children of the State, so manifest a breach of trust,

87 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond to William Mahone, June 25, 1877.

88 Richmond *Weekly Whig,* Supplement, May 18, 1877.

89 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, June 16, 1877.

90 *Ibid.*

91 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, W. W. Briggs, Jerusalem, Virginia, to William Mahone, June 19, 1877.

92 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, VII, 3, 4.

so palpable a disregard of the organic law, and so gross a violation of the will of the people, as the perversion or conversion of the public-school fund to any other purpose than that for which it was created.[93]

On July 4, 1877, the "Martin" letter appeared in which Mahone fearlessly set forth his views regarding the public debt.[94] Emphasizing the importance of this question he asserted that "there seems no subject which demands more prompt and careful consideration than this of the public debt, and there is none as to which my convictions are more settled and pronounced." The Funding Bill of 1871, he declared, was a "grievous mistake." It was based upon false assumptions, and under its provisions the State debt, instead of being paid, was growing larger and more burdensome each year. It was out of the question, he asserted, to increase the rate of taxation or to discover new objects of taxation.

> Where is all this to end? Virginia is now in process of practical, though unwilling, repudiation; already over five millions of back interest is due; annually the State fails to pay eight hundred thousand dollars of claims legalized by the Funding bill. To persevere in this path is to sacrifice the last vestige of the faith of the State and of the hope of the creditor. There has been, and there continues, a failure to pay. . . .
>
> It does seem to me to be the part of practical wisdom, and in the direct pursuit of an honest purpose to deal fairly and justly with the public creditors, that we should seek and insist upon, urge, and, if necessary, demand a compromise and readjustment of the debt of the Commonwealth and of the annual liabilities thereunder which shall be within the certain and reasonable capacity of the people to regularly meet.[95]

Mahone's clear-cut statements left no room for doubt as to his position on these two absorbing issues. As was to be expected, his frank declarations increased the number of his enemies as well as his friends.[96] There was little doubt, however, that these avowals increased Mahone's strength with the people at large.[97] His stand on the debt question aroused marked enthusiasm, as the following letter indicates:[98]

> Allow me to congratulate the state of Virginia—every industrial pursuit—every taxpayer in our land that a candidate, yes, our candidate—the peoples can-

93 *Ibid.*

94 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, VII, 1-3. This open letter was addressed to M. M. Martin, Charlotte Courthouse, Virginia.

95 *Ibid.*

96 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John J. Wise, Accomack [sic] Court House, to William Mahone, July 23, 1877.

97 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, T. E. McCorkle, Lexington, to S. B. French, July 10, 1877; Library of Congress, *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 76-79.

98 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, W. N. Newman, Richmond, to William Mahone, June 25, 1877.

didate for Governor—has the manliness to announce his financial policy to be in opposition to the bondholders control of the revenue of the State—the only policy that can save the state from utter ruin.

On July 30, 1877, only a few days before the Conservative Convention, the Mahone Brigade Association held its third annual reunion at Petersburg.[99] The first of these had convened at Petersburg in 1875, and the second at Norfolk in 1876.[100] This reunion of the brigade on the thirteenth anniversary of the Battle of the Crater was no less enthusiastic than its predecessors. A vivid picture of Mahone's division at the time of the surrender at Appomattox was presented by Colonel William H. Stewart of Portsmouth, the principal speaker of the occasion. About four hundred of Mahone's soldiers were present for the reunion. Their unbounded enthusiasm clearly indicated their approval of the sentiment once expressed by a member of the brigade that "Billy Mahone is the biggest little man God Almighty ever made."[101]

More than 1,400 delegates were in attendance at the Conservative State Convention which assembled in Richmond on August 8.[102] The occasion was marked by blistering weather, an abundance of free liquor and an unrestrained eloquence on the part of the delegates. Mahone's chief lieutenants were William E. Cameron, John S. Wise and Harrison Holt Riddleberger.[103] Fully cognizant of Mahone's strength because of his position on the free schools and the public debt, these men were eager to have the party platform adopted before the selection of a candidate.[104] The rival candidates, however, marshaled their forces in joint caucus and succeeded in preventing this innovation.[105]

In addition to Mahone there were five other prominent candidates. These were Major John W. Daniel of Lynchburg, Colonel F. W. M. Holliday of Winchester, General Fitzhugh Lee of Fairfax, General William B. Taliaferro of Gloucester, and General William Terry of Wytheville. They were "all elegant gentlemen, all popular, all Con-

99 *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, I, 28-30.

100 *Ibid.* Scrap Book, I, 19-27.

101 This is declared to have been the dying message of a member of Mahone's brigade to his friends. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, J. Horace Lacy, Ellwood, Virginia, to William Mahone, June 25, 1877.

102 Charles Chilton Pearson, *The Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1917, p. 74.

103 *Ibid.*

104 Long before the time of the convention R. F. Walker had urged the necessity of such a course of action. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, July 2, 12, 16, 1877.

105 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 74.

federate officers and all eager to accept the most difficult position the state had to fill."[106] All of the candidates, with the exception of Terry, had declared themselves in favor of some sort of "readjustment" of the State debt. Terry alone upheld the payment of the "last dollar."[107]

On the first ballot Mahone led the field, with Daniel, Holliday, Taliaferro, Lee, and Terry following in the order named.[108] Mahone's support came chiefly from Southside Virginia, supplemented by significant additions from several other sections of the State.[109] As the balloting progressed, Mahone, Daniel and Holliday remained in the race, while Terry, Lee and Taliaferro were dropped in turn.[110] Daniel and Holliday, rather than Mahone, gained additional support from the followers of Terry, Lee and Taliaferro.[111] Several of the "readjuster" delegates from the Southwest preferred Daniel to Mahone because the former "railroad king" had disappointed them in his failure to construct the road from Bristol to Cumberland Gap.[112] As a result of this shift in votes, on the fourth ballot Daniel went into the lead, followed by Mahone and Holliday.[113]

Terry, Lee and Taliaferro were nominated a second time by their followers, but their names were again dropped from the balloting because of meager support.[114] After the sixth ballot it was apparent that the battle was to be fought out between Mahone, Daniel and Holliday.[115] Under the circumstances it appeared extremely doubtful that

106 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 185.

107 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 73.

108 The vote, in round figures, was as follows: Mahone, 421; Daniel, 331; Holliday, 262; Taliaferro, 132; Lee, 126; and Terry, 116; *Petersburg Index and Appeal,* Aug. 10, 1877. Charles T. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* New York and Washington, 1904, p. 208. George M. McFarland, *The Extension of Democracy in Virginia, 1850-1895.* Princeton University, 1934, p. 103, (Doctoral Dissertation).

109 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 74.

110 The results of the second ballot were: Mahone, 440; Daniel, 414; Holliday, 276; Taliaferro, 159; and Lee, 123. The third ballot stood: Mahone 472; Daniel, 428; Holliday, 338; and Taliaferro, 172. *Petersburg Index and Appeal,* Aug. 10, 11, 1877.

111 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* pp. 208, 209.

112 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 74.

113 The vote stood as follows: Daniel, 489; Mahone, 460; Holliday, 355; and Terry, 108. *Petersburg Index and Appeal,* Aug. 11, 1877.

114 The fifth ballot stood: Mahone, 453; Daniel, 421; Holliday, 284; Taliaferro, 144; and Lee, 119. On the sixth ballot the count was as follows: Mahone, 467; Daniel, 447; Holliday, 344; and Taliaferro, 162. *Ibid.*

115 In this connection it is interesting to note that on July 12, R. F. Walker had written to Mahone, as follows: "Colonel Cutshaw, City Engineer, is a warm personal friend of Holladay [sic]. Cutshaw said last night to me that his friend Holladay would be about last in the beginning, and he wanted him to be there, *as it would*

Mahone would be able to win the support of a majority of the delegates, and there was the strong possibility that his opponents would unite to effect his defeat.[116] He was convinced, moreover, that if Holliday's name were dropped from the balloting it would unquestionably result in the nomination of Daniel.[117] And as between Daniel and Holliday, there was no question that Mahone preferred the latter.[118] If he could not win the nomination for himself, Mahone reasoned, at least there would be a measure of satisfaction in naming the candidate. Hence he determined to have his name withdrawn from the contest before the seventh ballot and to transfer his support to Holliday.[119]

In withdrawing Mahone's name from the race Captain John S. Wise delivered a striking speech which concluded as follows:

> At Appomattox the division of Mahone stacked more muskets than any other division of Lee's army, and General Mahone has now the proud distinction of having more followers on this floor than any other candidate who has aspired to the honor of the nomination for Governor of this glorious old State.
>
> I am commissioned by the hero of the Crater to appeal to every friend of his within these convention walls to remember his watchword, "Follow Accomac," and cast his vote for the one-armed hero of the Shenandoah Valley, Colonel F. W. M. Holliday.[120]

Accordingly, when the balloting was resumed, Senator Abel T. Johnson of Accomac County responded, "Accomac casts her thirty-two votes for the one-armed hero of the Shenandoah Valley, Colonel F. W. M. Holliday." The same course of action was followed by the other Mahone delegations, with the result that Holliday easily won the nomination over Daniel by a vote of 852 to 568.[121] General James A.

ensure his election! His idea is that you and Daniel will worry each other and disgust the Convention, and then the lowest man—Holladay—will be taken up as a compromise man! Brilliant logic that!" *Mahone Collection*. Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, July 12, 1877.

116 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887*. Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 35. Approximately 1,423 votes were cast on each ballot and a majority of 712 was necessary for nomination. *Petersburg Index and Appeal*, Aug. 11, 1877.

117 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service*, p. 210.

118 Holliday "had written a letter, which was circulated in his favor, pledging himself to abide by the will of the people as to the debt, and declaring it a matter for legislative determination, and not for executive interference. His friends in the convention, too, made similar pledges in his behalf." Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887*. Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 35. A feud had long existed between Mahone and Daniel because of a difference of opinion regarding railroad questions. This precluded the possibility of any united action on the part of their delegates. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service*, p. 209.

119 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service*, p. 209.

120 *Ibid.*, p. 210.

121 *Ibid.*, pp. 210, 211. *Petersburg Index and Appeal*, Aug. 11, 1877. Woodstock, Virginia, *Shenandoah Herald*, Aug. 15, 1877.

Walker was nominated for the position of lieutenant governor, and R. T. Daniel for attorney general.[122]

Mahone's friends were greatly distressed over his failure to secure the nomination. Some of them expressed the belief that he would have been able to defeat his opponents had he remained in the fight.[123] Others expressed the hope that he would run as an independent candidate, advocating the readjustment of the public debt.[124] One of his friends deplored his defeat, but rejoiced that he had led the field for a time and had finally named the man for the position.[125] John S. Wise wrote, "You emerged from that Convention better understood—More thoroughly vindicated from a storm of slander—On higher ground & more popular than you ever were in Virginia. . . . It is idle to say to you that the 'old guard' are always watching for your return from Elba."[126]

Soon after the convention the suggestion was made to Mahone that he should seek a seat in the House of Delegates where he would have an opportunity to deal with the debt question in a first-hand manner.[127] The proposition, however, made no appeal to him, for he realized that he could exert as much influence outside of the House as in it, and at the same time not be held liable for any failure in dealing with the problem.[128] His eagerness to stimulate the movement in favor of readjustment is evidenced, nevertheless, by the following extract from one of his letters:

> To secure results beneficial to the State the people have only to see that no man shall be sent to Legislature who does not stand pledged unequivocably to the principles set forth in my letter—not of those who profess a wish for readjustment but confess inability to see how it can be done—but such who have faith in the full capacity of the State to protect herself. Make the basis of my

122 *Petersburg Index and Appeal,* Aug. 11, 1877. R. T. Daniel died on August 16, only a few days after the Conservative Convention. On August 28, General James G. Field of Culpeper was given the nomination for attorney general by the State Conservation Committee. *Ibid.,* Aug. 17, 29, 1877.

123 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Aug. 11, 1877; John Welch, Rapidan Station, to William Mahone, Aug. 13, 1877.

124 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Samuel P. Holt, Senior, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, Aug. 1, 1877; E. W. Greer, Grant, Virginia, to William Mahone, Aug. 13, 1877.

125 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Robert A. Richardson, Marion, Virginia, to William Mahone, Aug. 13, 1877. *Petersburg Index and Appeal,* Aug. 13, 1877.

126 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, Richmond, to William Mahone, Aug. 14, 1877.

127 On August 20, 1877, Walker wrote to Mahone, "I enclose a private letter I have just received from Riddleberger. I send it to show you that even away up in Shenandoah they want you to come to the House of Delegates next winter." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Aug. 20, 1877.

128 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, Richmond, to William Mahone, Aug. 23, 1877.

letter the platform and stand the candidate for office squarely on it. Let it be the test for all candidates for office, elective by the people or the Legislature and let the members of the General Assembly understand that they are in all elections to be made by them to be governed accordingly.

In dealing with the subject in respect to the selection of members of the Legislature no conflict with the State ticket is necessary. We can just as firmly, as we should heartily, support it.[129]

The Conservative platform was ambiguous in that it urged the use of "all just and honorable means of bringing about an adjustment of the obligation of the Commonwealth which will bring the payment of interest upon the debt within the resources of the state derived from the present rate of taxation, and so do justice to all classes of our creditors."[130] Since the Republicans made no nominations for the various State offices, Holliday found it unnecessary to conduct a campaign.[131] James A. Walker, however, made a number of speeches against readjustment denouncing it as "repudiation and highway robbery."[132] When the election was held in November it was evident that the movement for readjustment was gaining strength in the State.[133] No one, however, saw more clearly than did Mahone the possibilities which lay in such a movement if the people could be fully aroused on the subject.

129 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to John H. Parker, Rappahannock, Virginia, Sept. 6, 1877.

130 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 74, 75. *Petersburg Index and Appeal,* Aug. 11, 1877.

131 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 75.

132 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 35.

133 On Sept. 26, Walker wrote to Mahone, "We are gaining ground everywhere on the Debt question. Parson Massie in the Senate will be a good thing. He will give 'Brad' a lively time." And on Nov. 7, Walker wrote, "I see that your platform has won almost everywhere. There will not be enough 'Last Dollar Men' in the next Legislature for seed!" *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Sept. 26, Nov. 7, 1877. Holliday and the other Conservative candidates on the State ticket were elected without opposition in a "quiet election." *Petersburg Index and Appeal,* Nov. 7, 1877.

CHAPTER VII: THE READJUSTER

> "I am confirmed this morning in the statements I made to you last night orally, as to the real character of the late contest in Virginia, and the true meaning of the result there. The issue made as to the public debt was not an issue for 'honest payment' on the one side, and 'repudiation' on the other, as was industriously disseminated by the Bourbon Ring Masters in Richmond. Far from it. Those thus stigmatized as 'Repudiators' by the Bourbons, are not opposed to the payment of the debt any more than their adversaries. The real issue thus sought to be disguised was between those with General Mahone advocating the policy of placing the State upon the line of progressive advancement in accordance with the spirit of the age and the Nation, and the Bourbons struggling in antagonism to both."—From a letter of John Tyler, Jr., to President Rutherford B. Hayes and John Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury, November 8, 1879.

THE public debt of Virginia, the settlement of which led to the Readjuster Movement, was contracted almost entirely through the active promotion of a system of "Public Works" by the State.[1] The movement for internal improvements had been inaugurated as early as 1784, but very little progress was made until the creation of a "Board of Public Works" in 1816.[2] From this time until the outbreak of the War Between the States, Virginia contributed generously to the construction of canals, turnpikes and railroads. The chief purpose of this activity was to establish a closer relationship between the geographic divisions of the State, and to compete more successfully with outside interests for the vast resources of the trans-Allegheny region.[3] As a result of this policy the State had accumulated a bonded debt of $33,000,000.00 by the year 1860. This liability, however, was more than offset by the possession of stocks and bonds in the railroads and canals which were valued at $43,000,000.00.[4]

The War Between the States, a major portion of which was fought in Virginia, left the State's system of public works in a deplorable con-

1 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, p. 1. This monograph is unquestionably the most thorough and painstaking study which has been made of the State debt of Virginia and its settlement by the Readjusters. It is used throughout the chapter as a background for Mahone's activity as a Readjuster.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 2.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 3.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6.

dition. It was obvious that both time and money would be needed before the railroads would be in a condition to pay dividends. In addition to the destruction of property, the trans-Allegheny section of Virginia, that portion of the State which had clamored most loudly for the construction of internal improvements, had now withdrawn from the Old Dominion and set up the State of West Virginia. It was a lamentable fact, too, that the tax-paying capacity of Virginians had been greatly reduced by the abolition of slavery and the cancellation of Confederate debts. These three factors, the destruction of property, the deprivation of land and resources, and the loss of private holdings, combined to raise a serious question regarding the State debt in 1865.[5]

When the General Assembly met in the fall of that year its members felt the necessity of taking definite action in the matter. In his message of December 4, 1865, Governor Pierpont declared, "The debt, with its interest, must be paid; at the same time, we must look to the ability of the people to pay."[6] This statement, in fact, embodied the three chief considerations regarding the debt, namely: how much the State was under obligation to pay, to what extent it was able to meet its obligations, and how it could best fulfill its duties to the restless creditors and the impoverished citizens.[7] Under the circumstances the General Assembly might well have refused to take any definite action until a settlement could be reached with West Virginia. Or it might have declared the State bankrupt and sought to effect a compromise with the creditors. Instead of adopting either of these alternatives, however, the Legislature passed the Funding Act of March 2, 1866, by which it assumed full responsibility for the complete ante-bellum debt of Virginia, and "authorized the funding of the entire war-time interest into bonds bearing the same rate of interest as the principal."[8]

The Funding Act of 1866 was passed by a legislative body which was motivated by the worthy purpose of preserving the unblemished record of the State in fiscal matters. On the other hand, it seemed to disregard entirely the changed conditions which had been brought about by the devastations of war and the disruption of the State. This was clearly demonstrated in the appointment of a commission to confer with the "brethren of West Virginia" for the purpose of restoring the Virginia

5 The State debt, increased by war time interest, was now approximately $38,000,000.00. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.

6 *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia for the Session of 1865-66*, Richmond, 1865, p. 10.

7 Morton, *History of Virginia*, III, 182.

8 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 9, 10.

of ante-bellum years.[9] West Virginia, as might have been expected, failed to take any action in the matter, and certain individuals began to express the opinion that the public debt should be scaled in proportion to the losses sustained by Virginia. The Legislature, however, was quick to reprove such sentiments and late in 1866 sought to allay alarm by declaring that it had no intention whatsoever of repudiating any of its debts.[10]

The distressing financial situation in Virginia necessitated the formulation of a definite policy regarding the assets held by the State in the various internal improvements. The pressing burden of interest and the relative cheapness of the bonds urged the necessity of selling the State's interest in these public works. On the contrary, the policy of the State in the past and the prevailing optimism regarding the future suggested the wisdom of retaining these investments for future revenue.[11] The question was the more difficult of solution because it involved the problem of transportation and the attitude of the State in this regard. The railroads demanded money for purposes of reconstruction and extension, but the State was no longer in a position to extend this aid as it had in the past. From the standpoint of commerce it seemed that the old policy should give way to that of private ownership and consolidated management. After continued agitation and prolonged discussion the Legislature passed a series of acts which allowed the various roads to purchase the State's assets in the railroads, and at the same time to consolidate their managements. These legislative provisions, however, were worded in such a way as to safeguard, in so far as possible, the interests of both the State and the private shareholders in the public works.[12]

After nearly three years of military government, Virginia was restored to the Union early in 1870. The State debt at this time was estimated to be over $45,000,000.00—$36.00 for each person and $62.00 for each white.[13] Commerce was carried on with considerable difficulty and the shares still retained by the State in public works paid small dividends. In addition to the burdensome debt, Virginia was faced with a serious economic problem. In 1870 there were two million

9 *Ibid.*, p. 10. Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 24.

10 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 10, 11. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 182.

11 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 12.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

acres less under cultivation than in 1860. In the decade from 1860 to 1870 the number of pounds of tobacco raised in the State had been reduced by two-thirds, and the corn and wheat crops had decreased one-half. Negro labor had proved unreliable and numerous adjustments in agriculture had been necessitated. Furthermore, a succession of floods and droughts had added to the distressing conditions.[14]

In a message to the General Assembly of Virginia on March 8, 1870, Governor Walker declared:

> The magnitude of the public debt; the character, condition, and ultimate disposition of the assets and securities held by the State; the prompt restoration of our credit and the mode of accomplishing it; the sources of our revenue and the ability of the people to respond to taxation in an amount sufficient to meet the current expenses of the Government and the maturing interest upon the State debt, are all subjects demanding profound consideration and the most mature deliberation and action on your part.[15]

To restore the credit of the State, Walker recommended that the entire debt should be funded into uniform coupon bonds which would bear the same rate of interest as the old, and whose coupons would be receivable for taxes and other public dues. He further advocated the exchange of the State's interest in public works for State bonds. In addition to these more significant recommendations he favored the curtailment of government expenses, the taxation of all property upon its ante-bellum value, and an increase of revenue as provided for under the recently adopted Constitution.[16]

These recommendations were made in a spirit of optimism entirely inconsistent with the extremity of the situation. Nevertheless, the Governor's views were endorsed by the press and promptly acted upon by the Legislature. Changes were made in the tax laws, a liberal railroad policy was embodied in the Railroad Act of March 28, and the fiscal recommendations were carried out to a considerable degree in the Funding Act of March 30, 1871.[17] This Act was prefaced by the assertion that West Virginia included one-third of the territory and population of ante-bellum Virginia, and hence would be expected to assume one-third of the State debt contracted previous to the war. It provided that the owners of bonds might fund them into new coupon or regis-

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 184, 185.

15 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia: begun and held at the Capitol, in the City of Richmond, on Tuesday, the fifth day of October, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine—being the ninety-third year of the Commonwealth,* Richmond, 1870, p. 138.

16 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 26.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 26-30. Squires, *Through Centuries Three,* pp. 513, 514.

tered bonds to the value of two-thirds of the original bonds, which would become payable in from ten to thirty-four years. They were to bear six per cent interest payable semi-annually on the first of January and of July. The coupons, likewise, were to be payable semi-annually and after maturity would be receivable for all taxes, debts, and demands due the State. Certificates bearing the same date as the bonds were to be issued to cover the remaining one-third of the debt, and the payment of this portion of the bond, and the interest thereon, was to be made "in accordance with such settlement as shall hereafter be had between the states of Virginia and West Virginia in regard to the public debt of the State of Virginia existing at the time of its dismemberment." The Act further provided for the creation of a sinking fund to be administered by the treasurer, auditor of public accounts and second auditor of the State.[18]

There were fundamental weaknesses in the "restoration of credit" policy which, though not immediately evident, were to be revealed with the passing of years. Even if the Funding Act were accepted by all the creditors there was a question as to whether its heavy obligations could be met by the State. There were indications that the revenue under the new tax law would be sufficient only for the payment of the interest on the new debt principal and the minimum appropriation for public schools under the Constitution. This would leave nothing whatsoever for the expenses of government, which were estimated at more than a million dollars a year.[19] It will be recalled that this Act, as well as that which provided for the sale of the State's assets in the railroads, was proposed by interested parties and passed through the employment of skillful lobbyists. It was by no means a reflection of well-advised popular will, but sprang from a period of demagogy which came as a result of the encroachments of northern railroad interests in Virginia and the opposition which they encountered there.[20]

The chief issue in the Virginia campaign of 1871 was declared by the Conservatives to be that of "Conservative or Radical rule." Other issues, no doubt, were equally important in determining the votes of the people. It was significant, however, that only twenty-six of the one hundred and thirty-two members of the previous House were returned, and that the Conservatives increased their majority in both Houses.[21]

18 *Riddleberger Papers.* "The Funding Bill of 1871."

19 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 30, 31.

20 *Ibid.,* pp. 32, 33.

21 *Ibid.,* pp. 40-42. Squires' comment in this connection is interesting. "When the members of the legislature returned to their homes after the Railway and Funding

Mahone, the Readjuster

Despite the fact that Walker reasserted his financial policies to the Legislature on December 6, 1871, this body, by a joint vote of 119 to 33, voted to suspend the operation of the Funding Act. The Governor vetoed the bill "because it was contrary to sound public policy and discriminated against those who had not funded." The Senate concurred in his views and the Funding Act remained in force.[22] Nevertheless, the Legislature was able to pass a bill over the governor's veto which prohibited the receipt of coupons for taxes and ordered the payment of only four per cent on the recognized debt of Virginia. Late in 1872, however, the State Supreme Court decided that the State must accept in payment of taxes the coupons on all bonds which had been issued under the Funding Act prior to the attempted prohibition.[23] For the time being the attitude of the governor and the courts discouraged further opposition to the Funding Act, but there was unmistakable hostility to its provisions on the part of Republicans and Independents and a minority of the Conservatives, especially those in the southwestern section of the State.[24]

When Governor Kemper began his term of office on January 1, 1874, the financial situation was even more desperate than that which confronted Walker in 1870. The carpet-bagger Wells had left a large surplus in the State treasury, but Walker left outstanding obligations to the extent of nearly a million dollars and tax receivable coupons to the amount of half a million. Not only was the State bankrupt, but under the provisions of the Funding Act the indebtedness was increasing at the rate of a million dollars a year.[25] The financial panic of 1873 and the consequent depression made the outlook appear even more gloomy.

Kemper lost no time in attacking the debt problem. In his message to the Legislature on March 27, 1874, he said:

> The State credit is prostrate. The best bonds of Virginia rate lower in the Stock Exchange of London than those of Egypt, Turkey, or Peru, and our

Acts had been passed they found their constituents angry. Nearly all were retired to private life. Of 132 Delegates only 26 were returned. They deserved it." Squires, *Through Centuries Three,* p. 515.

22 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 42.

23 This decision was reached by a vote of three to one, with Judge Waller R. Staples dissenting. It gave rise to a preferred class of bonds, soon known as "consols," to the amount of some twenty millions of dollars, or about two-thirds of the recognized debt. Those bonds whose coupons could not be used in the payment of taxes were called "peelers." *Ibid.,* pp. 42, 43.

24 *Ibid.,* pp. 43-46.

25 *Ibid.,* pp. 50, 51.

credit ranks in the grade of such countries as Mexico and San Domingo. No grosser fallacy can be conceived than the one which claims that a Commonwealth can flourish while its credit is in a state of prostration or dishonor.[26]

Kemper urged the adoption of a permanent financial policy in order to cope with the situation. He favored the equality of bond-holders and uniformity of obligations and believed that these objectives could be realized by a conference with the holders of "consols," or preferred bonds. He advocated the prompt payment of interest, and believed it could be achieved by a reduction of expenses, an increase in revenues, and a more careful administration of the revenue laws.[27]

His proposal of a conference with the consol holders was approved by the Legislature; and the Governor, and Treasurer, R. M. T. Hunter, were named as representatives of the State. The British consol holders were represented in part, by Hugh McCulloch, ex-Secretary of the Treasury, and several prominent Virginians were selected to represent most of the remaining creditors. In the conference the Governor gave a detailed account of the situation with which Virginia was faced in dealing with the bondholders. Out of the discussion there arose several proposals for funding the consol debt. No agreement could be reached, however, for it became evident that the holders of "consols" would be willing to surrender their position as preferred creditors only with the prospect of securing even more favorable terms.[28] With the failure of this second effort to nullify the Funding Act there was a general feeling among the upper classes that no alternative remained but to "pay the debt."[29]

The policy of the debt payers called for the reduction of expenses, the increase of revenues and the reorganization of the sinking fund. Definite steps were taken to achieve these objectives but there were always interested parties who sought to hinder or prevent the adoption of proposed legislation. On March 31, 1875, an Act was passed providing for the consolidation of the two sinking funds of Virginia and authorizing the payment of interest on the whole fund. In 1877 Governor Kemper spoke optimistically regarding the fiscal results which had been achieved during his administration, but the auditor's reports

26 *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia, for the session of 1874,* Richmond, 1874, pp. 347, 348. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 183, 184.

27 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 51, 52.

28 *Ibid.,* pp. 52, 53.

29 *Ibid.,* p. 53.

showed that more than four millions of unpaid interest had accrued and that there was still a large annual deficit in the treasury.[30]

Strong opposition to the program of the debt payers was manifested by the farmers who felt that very little attention was being paid to their interests by those in authority. As early as 1873 many of them began to organize in "granges" with the hope of improving their condition by coöperative action. By January, 1876, there were 685 granges in Virginia with a membership of 18,783. In their meetings the farmers urged the adoption of favorable legislation regarding transportation, immigration and the inspection of tobacco and fertilizers. Their recommendations, however, received very little consideration from the Legislature, and in 1877 the organizations seemed to be decreasing in membership but becoming more radical in character.[31]

Those who were interested in the public schools of the State also had just cause for grievance against the program of the debt payers. In 1870 the Legislature had selected as superintendent of public instruction Dr. William Henry Ruffner, a son of Henry Ruffner, and a man of marked intelligence, initiative and administrative ability. To him was entrusted the responsibilty of drafting the school laws and the virtual selection of the local school officials. Under his efficient direction much of the opposition of the whites to free public schools was being gradually overcome.[32] From the very first, as might be expected, the public schools were strongly favored by the negroes. In 1873 Ruffner secured the passage of an Act which required the auditor to pay the schools their constitutional share of the State funds in cash. In spite of this provision, however, nearly $400,000.00 was due the schools in 1875, and by 1877 the amount had increased to $526,000.00.[33] The attitude of many of the debt payers seemed to be that the State was under moral obligation to pay its debt but that the education of the masses was a luxury which was by no means indispensable. The result was

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 53-58.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

32 During the anté-bellum period the free schools were commonly looked upon as "pauper schools" to which no self-respecting family would send its children. After the war many white people retained this traditional hostility to the public schools and, in addition, several other objections were cited. The public school system, its opponents declared, was of foreign origin and had been imposed upon them by their conquerors. Its purpose, they felt, was to break down social ranks and establish the equality of the races. In any event, they contended, the experiment was much too costly to be tried while the State was in such an impoverished condition. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 60, 61. The best treatment of this subject is that of William Arthur Maddox, *The Free School Idea in Virginia Before the Civil War; a phase of political and social evolution,* New York, Columbia University, 1918.

33 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 62.

that many teachers were going unpaid and schools were being closed although the school tax was being collected and the public school system constantly gaining in popularity.[34]

Deplorable conditions such as these eventually and inevitably culminated in the Readjuster Movement in the State. The so-called "original readjusters" were those who first raised questions as to the validity of the whole debt of Virginia, and who insisted that the changed conditions of the post-bellum period necessitated and warranted a readjustment of the debt. In this group were John E. (Parson) Massey, of Albemarle, Abram Fulkerson of Washington, J. Horace Lacy of Spotsylvania, and A. M. Lybrook of Patrick.[35] Massey claimed to be the father of the Readjuster Movement[36] and was unquestionably one of the first to advocate readjustment. Speaking before the House of Delegates in 1875, he declared:

> One cause of my opposition to the funding bill is, that it *has done* and *is doing* more to impair her credit than any other measure I have known to be adopted by a Virginia Legislature. I know no other measure which has given so *general dissatisfaction;* and which has so e*mbarrassed* and *stagnated* every interest, whether public or private; and if I could wrest Virginia from its iron grasp, I should feel that I was doing much towards maintaining and preserving her honor, and inaugurating a brighter and better day.[37]

Among the arguments advanced in favor of readjustment were the following: (1) Since Virginia had been regarded as conquered territory, her ante-bellum debts, according to the law of nations, should devolve upon the conqueror. (2) If the Federal Government denied the conquered territory theory, then justice demanded that the debt should be reduced according to the losses which Virginia had sustained —a reduction of one-third because of the withdrawal of West Virginia, and one-third because of property destruction during the war. (3) Any recognition of the public debt on the part of Virginia between 1865 and 1870 was invalid because the State was not then in possession of its sovereignty. The Readjusters, in addition, maintained that the

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 258.

35 There were several other prominent individuals in this group, including Colonel Frank G. Ruffin whose articles in reply to the Council of Foreign Bondholders, London, appeared in the *Whig* over the signature of "A Virginia Farmer." Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 63, 64.

36 Elizabeth H. Hancock, Editor, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* New York and Washington, 1909, pp. 197, 276.

37 Virginia State Library, *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. I, "Speech of Mr. Massey of Albemarle, on the bill to prevent counterfeit, or improperly obtained coupons from being received in payment of taxes, debts, dues and demands due the State." Delivered in the Virginia House of Delegates, February 8th, 1875, Richmond, 1875, p. 4.

Funding Act lacked moral force because its passage had been secured by fraudulent means. They declared that the arguments of "state's honor" and "restoration of credit" advanced by the debt payers were purely commercial. They ridiculed taxes on dogs and whiskey and other expedients of the debt payers to secure sufficient revenue to meet the interest payments on the bloated debt.[38]

In 1877 it was necessary to elect a successor to Governor Kemper as well as members of the Legislature for the following session. The selection of a Conservative candidate for the governorship was of unusual importance since the disintegration and apathy of the Republican party vouchsafed his election. Aspirants for the office came forward from the various sections of the State—Terry from the Southwest, Holliday from the Valley, Daniel and Lee from Piedmont, and Taliaferro from Tidewater. None of these candidates expressed, or was expected to express, decided opinions on the controversial issues of the day.[39] The platform was to be left in the hands of the Conservative Convention, and determined after the nomination of candidates.

Encouraged by a host of friends and impelled by the grievous problems which threatened the welfare of Virginia,[40] Mahone entered the race for governor. Living in Petersburg at the time, he was regarded as the representative of Southside Virginia. In marked contrast to the other candidates, Mahone took a definite stand on the two most vital issues facing Virginia in 1877, namely, the public debt and the public schools.[41] Because of the provisions of the Funding Act of 1871, which he regarded as a grievous mistake, Mahone declared that Virginia was

38 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 63, 64. Several of these arguments were advanced in an address by Henry A. Wise to the Knights of Pythias on Dec. 29, 1874. The address appeared in pamphlet form, with this note added, under date of Jan. 6, 1875: "I appeal to the Legislature to make no appropriation for the payment of the debts of the Old State of Virginia, and to the people of Virginia to instruct their representatives never to appropriate for any debt not their own. To pay debts never contracted by their present Body Politic, without their consent, except under the duress of a suffrage forced upon them, and which their Legislature was incompetent to assume by statute without the concurrence of West Virginia, would show them to be endowed with—not 'common,' but very uncommon 'honesty.'" Virginia State Library, *Virginia Political Pamphlets.* Vol. 4, "Address of Henry A. Wise, at West Point, Virginia, December 29, 1874, to the Knights of Pythias, on their invitation," p. 18.

39 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 185. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 68.

40 "It was probably with the hope of using the office to recover his road, now in the hands of a receiver, that Mahone began his race for the governorship." Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 71.

41 Mahone was by no means an "original readjuster." As a matter of fact, his views regarding the debt question had undergone a radical change with the passing of years. Conversations with Senator Carter Glass. Massey states that Mahone was

"in process of practical, though unwilling, repudiation."[42] Under existing conditions, he affirmed, it was the part of both wisdom and honesty that Virginia "should seek and insist upon, urge, and if necessary, demand a compromise and readjustment of the debt of the Commonwealth and of the annual liabilities thereunder which shall be within the certain and reasonable capacity of the people to regularly meet."[43] On the public school issue Mahone was no less pronounced in his views. If he were in a position to determine such questions, he asserted, he "would let the very wheels of government stand still" before he would consent to "the perversion or conversion of the public-school fund to any other purpose than that for which it was created."[44]

Long before the nominating convention assembled in Richmond on August 8 it was apparent to Mahone and his lieutenants that the opposition was willing to unite on "anybody to beat Mahone."[45] So popular, however, were the pronouncements which he made and so skillfully conducted was the preliminary canvass, that Mahone had more delegates present at the convention than any other candidate. Nevertheless, as the balloting progressed and the weaker candidates were eliminated, Mahone's chances of success were very much diminished. He requested, therefore, that his name be withdrawn from the race and his support given to Holliday, whose attitude toward readjustment appeared to be more favorable than that of the other candidates. As a result of this maneuver Holliday received the nomination over Daniel by a large majority.[46] The Conservative platform was colorless in its attitude toward readjustment, but it was significant that the party had finally taken a stand on the debt question.[47]

Mahone was disappointed in his failure to secure the nomination but had no desire to run as an independent candidate for governor on a platform advocating readjustment. He was convinced, however, that the debt question was of paramount importance to the people, and he saw in it the possibility of forming "a solid governing party in the State." In a confidential letter to H. H. Riddleberger, dated August 31, 1877, he discussed the situation in detail.

converted to the cause of readjustment by reading his (Massey's) pamphlet, "Debts and Taxes," a copy of which was given him by Abram Fulkerson. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey*, p. 150.

42 *Mahone Collection*. Scrap Books, VII, 1, 2.
43 *Ibid*. Scrap Books, VII, 2.
44 *Ibid*. Scrap Books, VII, 4.
45 Richmond *Weekly Whig*, Supplement, May 18, 1877.
46 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887*. Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 34, 35.
47 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 74, 75.

The Debt question is the issue on which the formation of a solid governing party in the State may be now formed. It involves every interest of wellfare [sic] immediate and future to the State. The matter of taxation will ever be of concern to the people. The influx of capital, the promotion of enterprise and progress [sic]. Now is the time to form the party. If we had succeeded in the convention it could have been better done—but the incompleteness of success there, is not fatal. It only makes the work a little harder—and I believe the will of the people to right the loss of ground in that field, is of consequence aroused & the more firmly determined. They need leadership and that is all.[48]

Two important steps must be taken, Mahone declared, to promote the cause of readjustment. The first of these was the selection of members for the Legislature on the platform of a proper readjustment of the Debt.

It may have been expedient for the convention to have spoken in cautious terms on this question, but the people need not, and all will be lost unless they do speak out for themselves in plain unmistakable language. This twaddle about the honor of the State—her credit and the integrity of her obligations—is sheer nonsense, when we consider her treatment of the peeler Bonds—her continued default and robery [sic] of the school-fund. It is in emphatic words that we should deal with the question. It is the very life of the State and in truth her honor that are at stake. Readjustment satisfactory to her creditors—and here the Funders mean the consol holders—means nothing but repudiation of all else while the old mother of States and Statesmen continues under the insult of having her Revenues seized and dealt with at the will of her creditors, while she continues as an assignee in Bankruptcy.

The people may speak their own sentiments in this wise, without injury to the State ticket. That we will elect. Let no man be sent to the Legislature who does not come up heartily and fully to our purpose—a readjustment of the debt, which shall determine and forever put at rest the amount we ought justly and will undertake to pay, and secure to that sum an equitable participation in her means to pay, fixing the rates of interest within the certain resources of Revenue to discharge it promptly at the hands of her own chosen agents, without any increase of the present rate of taxation. This is the readjustment needed by every sense of duty to the State and the creditor and I would employ every power to enforce it.[49]

It was the duty of the people, accordingly, to elect "representatives of their faith and will." Then the second important step must be taken —the organization of these members into a definite political party.

The formation of such members into a party is the all essential step. This must be done before any organization of the Legislature is proceeded with. The purpose to have readjustment, must right then be signified. In the very beginning

48 *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, Aug. 31, 1877.

49 *Ibid.*

it would be told to, and realized by, all the world that the line of severe business had been really entered upon.

In ten days time the Readjusters (if they choose) would have accomplished enough of their high mission to make its consummation a matter of their own will. I tell you, my friend, I never saw more clearly the way to the solution of so grave and vital a project as I do in this case—and all depends upon organization.[50]

In this most significant letter Mahone set forth his convictions regarding the State debt and how the problem should be handled. He testified to the importance of the issue when he declared that it involved "every interest of wellfare immediate and future to the State." He contended that the duty of the people in this emergency was to elect "representatives of their faith and will." He asserted that the formation of these members into a definite party must be achieved even before the organization of the Legislature in order that they might undertake with confidence the accomplishment "of their high mission." And to the successful consummation of readjustment Mahone unequivocally pledged himself. "No man shall cross my path on this issue, you may depend on it, and I promise to make it hot for the individual who shall so presume."[51]

During the campaign of 1877 numerous speeches were made on the subject of the State debt. Although Holliday took no active part in the canvass, James A. Walker, the nominee for lieutenant governor, made several addresses in which he denounced the Readjusters and their policy of "forcible re-adjustment."[52] Addresses of a similar nature were made by Gilbert C. Walker, Governor of the State at the time of the passage of the Funding Act of 1871,[53] and by John W. Daniel, who but recently had lost the nomination for governor.[54] In support of the policy of readjustment appeared the open letter of H. H. Riddleberger.[55] And Mahone continued to insist that no man should be elected to the Legislature who was not pledged unequivocally to the principles set forth in his debt letter—"not of those who profess a wish for readjustment but confess inability to see how it can be done—but such who

50 *Ibid.*

51 *Ibid.*

52 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 35. Walker frequently declared that he regarded "repudiation as theft and forcible re-adjustment as high-way robbery." *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, VIII, 18.

53 *Mahone Collection,* Scrap Books, VIII, 1-6.

54 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, VIII, 8, 9.

55 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, VIII, 11.

have faith in the full capacity of the State to protect herself."[56] In addition to the debt question there were other issues of less importance, but the attitude of the people was reflected in the fall election when twenty-two Independents were elected to the House and the policy of readjustment won a sweeping victory.[57]

When the Legislature convened in December, 1877, Judge H. C. Allen, a delegate from the Valley, was chosen Speaker of the House to succeed Marshall Hanger, a strong Conservative. A finance committee was appointed with James Barbour as chairman. From this committee came the Barbour Bill.[58] The preamble of the bill declared that the present rate of taxation, fifty cents on every hundred dollars of the assessed value of property, was "the utmost limit" to which the General Assembly should proceed in levying taxes. It frankly admitted, however, that the revenue under such a tax was insufficient to enable the State "to maintain its governmental organization by paying the necessary expenses incident thereto under the most rigid system of economy, and to discharge its constitutional obligation to the system of free schools, ordained by the fundamental law of this commonwealth, and to pay the present rate of interest on the amount claimed as the principal of the public debt."[59] The bill provided, therefore, that of each fifty cents collected through the general property tax, twenty-five cents should be devoted to the necessary expenses of maintaining the government, ten cents to public free school purposes, and fifteen cents to the payment of the interest on the public debt.[60] In order to make clear the intent and purpose of the bill it was stated that

> Nothing in this act shall be construed as compelling the creditors of the state to compromise their legal rights, it being the intention of the general assembly by the provisions of this act to relieve the present financial embarrassments of the state with a purpose to secure an adjustment of the public debt, with the consent of the creditors, if practicable, and without discriminating between them, upon fair and equitable principles.[61]

56 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Petersburg, to John H. Parker, Rappahannock, Virginia, Sept. 6, 1877.

57 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 75-78.

58 *Ibid.,* p. 78. In a letter dated July 22, 1930, John S. Barbour writes, "My father James Barbour was himself one of the leaders in the original Readjuster movement prior to the ascendancy of General Mahone therein and was the author of the Barbour bill, the first bill passed by the Virginia Legislature for scaling the debt of Virginia." *Personal Papers.* John S. Barbour, Washington, to N. M. Blake, July 22, 1930.

59 *Riddleberger Papers.* "The Barbour Bill."

60 It was definitely stated that the portions of the revenue which were to be set aside for the operation of the government and for the public school fund must be paid in "lawful money of the United States." *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.*

Governor Holliday who, before his election, had written a letter "pledging himself to abide by the will of the people as to the debt, and declaring it a matter for legislative determination, and not for executive interference," now lost no time in vetoing the Barbour Bill.[62] He justified his action by declaring that the measure was only an effort to rob the creditors and a transfer of the "vexed and vexing question from the legislature to the courts."[63] Apparently no alternative now remained but to appeal to the creditors for a compromise. Accordingly, the Bocock-Fowler Act was passed on March 14, 1878, which provided "that the interest charge be cut in half if the bondholders would consent to the reduction."[64]

The same month Mahone wrote to Riddleberger expressing the conviction that the time had come when they were "forced to proceed boldly, to organize a party upon the basis of the great principles which underlie the Finance Committee's Bill, vetoed by the Gov[ernor]."[65] In this important issue Mahone felt that the "sacred principles of a Republican form of government" were at stake. He was convinced that the people of Virginia were ready and eager for the organization of an independent party and he hoped to see such a movement inaugurated before the adjournment of the Legislature.

> An independent organization is essential to protect the people at coming elections against the power and influence of the old Funders organization. I am constantly in receipt of letters urging this step. The court house rings generally are composed of Funders, and they make the party machinery of the defunct conservative concern. We have the mutual interest and voters to make up a grand party. We must embrace it. Our friends are trying for a Constitutional Convention. The Funders are opposed.[66]

The organization which Mahone had in mind was not established during the session of the General Assembly, but the initial step was taken on the evening following its adjournment. At a meeting of Readjusters in Richmond a committee, composed of H. H. Harrison, Lewis E. Harvie, B. W. Lacy, A. Moseley, Judge W. H. Mann and General Mahone, was appointed to inform the people of the State what progress had been made by the Readjusters and what should be

62 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 35. Richmond *Whig,* Dec. 1, 1880.

63 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 79.

64 *Acts and Joint Resolutions passed by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, during the session of 1877-78,* Richmond, 1878, pp. 230-233. McFarland, *Extension of Democracy in Virginia,* p. 111.

65 *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, March 2, 1878.

66 *Ibid.*

their future course of action. This was followed by a conference representing all sections of the State, held at Richmond on April 25.[67] A readjuster platform was adopted which declared that both the veto of the Barbour Bill by the Governor and the decision of the State Supreme Court declaring the binding force of the Funding Act were in direct opposition to the will of the people as expressed in the Conservative platform of 1877. Readjuster leaders were urged to take steps which would insure the realization of the public will, and to advocate "the sovereignty of the people of the state in matters of taxation, expenditures, and schools; reform and economy in administration; and a constitutional convention."[68]

In 1878 it would appear that the Readjusters hoped to increase their chances of success in the Congressional election by identifying the Virginia debt question with the national Greenback movement. Both were strongly opposed to brokers and money rings, to court-house cliques and Bourbons. Some Readjusters, however, were unwilling to desert the Conservative party for the Greenbackers, and at the same time certain Funders were in sympathy with the Greenback movement. For various reasons, then, the issues in the campaign were by no means clear-cut. The result was that two Readjusters, and these of a moderate type, were elected to Congress.[69]

Late in the same year a society was organized in Richmond "to preserve the credit of the State." It was composed of thirty-nine prominent citizens, with Robert Beverly serving as president.[70] Without doubt, however, the leading figure was William L. Royall, attorney for the bondholders, and secretary of the organization.[71] An open letter was issued declaring that the debt of Virginia had been honestly contracted

67 *Mahone Collection.* Printed Letters, William Mahone to Readjuster members of the General Assembly, May 15, 1878.

68 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 80.

69 *Ibid.,* pp. 80-84.

70 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, VIII, 59.

71 Royall was a pronounced Funder and this aspect of the question is presented in his account of the debt controversy. See William Lawrence Royall, *History of the Virginia Debt Controversy. The negro's vicious influence in Politics,* Richmond, 1897. Royall was so bitterly opposed to Mahone's position on the debt question that he lost no opportunity to denounce and vilify him. In his *Reminiscences* he goes so far as to cast aspersion on Mahone's military career. Realizing, perhaps, the fallacy of his position, Royall declares, "Possibly I am not doing Mahone justice in this sketch of him, because I hated him and he is the only man I ever hated. For a number of years he was engaged in a deliberate attempt to dishonor my native State by forcing a repudiation of her public debt, and in the contest which grew out of that attempt I came to hate him." Royall, *Reminiscences,* pp. 80, 81.

and therefore, "the assertion that we cannot pay the interest upon our public debt without imposing great burdens upon themselves, if true, would not exonerate us from the obligation to perform our duty of paying our creditors the money we have borrowed from them and justly owe to them."[72] The letter maintained that an additional tax of twenty cents on the hundred dollars' worth of property would be sufficient to pay the expenses of government, maintain the schools, pay the creditors full interest on the debt, and provide a sinking fund which would extinguish the debt in a few years. An appeal was made to every citizen of Virginia to coöperate in the movement by organizing similar affiliated societies in each county, city and town and to select and support representatives for the Legislature in 1879 who were in favor of meeting the honest obligations of the State.[73] This aggressive movement on the part of the Funders was clearly a mistake. It recognized the paramount importance of the fiscal issue and dared to suggest an increase in taxation in violation of the Conservative platform of 1877. More significant still was the fact that it paved the way for the organization of the Readjuster party early in the following year.[74]

When the Legislature convened in December, 1878, there were indications that the creditors of the State were prepared to compromise with the debtors regarding the amount of the debt and the rate of interest to be paid thereon. Two propositions were advanced by the creditors which, after various changes, were embodied in the McCulloch Bill.[75]

72 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, VIII, 59.

73 *Ibid.*

74 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 83, 84. The challenge of the "debt payers" was by no means left unanswered. The friends of readjustment soon responded in a critical pamphlet which concluded with a call to action. "Every consideration of wisdom and of interest demands that the question should be concluded and forever put at rest. If that result is to be effected, it is apparent the people, in their sovereign capacity, must quickly take the matter in hand, and, of themselves, proceed to organize, assert and enforce their will." *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "A Review of the Address, Statements and Figures of the 'Nine-and-Thirty,'" p. 8. In 1878 Honorable James Lyons wrote an able article attacking the constitutionality of the Funding Act. In reply to the question as to what he would do with the State debt, he answered, "I would exfoliate the Funding Bill—then extirpate it. I would then ascertain how much principle and how much simple interest upon it is due by the State. I would divide the interest into such instalments as the State can bear, and give non-interest-bearing bonds for it, and raise as much revenue by taxation as would pay it and the accruing interest 'promptly as it accrues.'" Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "The Funding Bill; Is It Constitutional? The opinion of Hon. James Lyons in the negative." Richmond, 1878. This article, according to Pearson, was rejected by the *Law Journal* because of the hostile sentiment of "debt payers" at the time. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 84.

75 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 85, 86.

While this measure was before the General Assembly the Readjuster leaders determined to call a convention of the people of the State who were clamoring for a readjustment of the debt. Opposition to the McCulloch Bill was the immediate motive behind the call, but at the same time it was clearly recognized that the organization of the "Committee of Thirty-Nine" necessitated more definite and united action on the part of the Readjusters.[76]

Among the Readjusters who were most active in promoting the convention were Abram Fulkerson, John Paul, Lewis Harvie, and James Barbour.[77] An address to the people of Virginia was prepared by Barbour in which he called upon those who were interested in the cause of readjustment

> to appoint delegates, by county, district and ward meetings, as you may see fit, to attend a convention of Re-Adjusters, to be held in the city of Richmond, on Tuesday, the 25th day of February, 1879, that you may for yourselves give direct expression to your views in this respect, and take such measures as may seem to you proper to protect your imperilled rights and interests, as citizens and taxpayers of the Commonwealth.[78]

No sooner had the call been issued than the Readjusters in all sections of the State began to hold meetings to endorse the movement and elect delegates to the convention. The enthusiasm which was manifest in these gatherings revealed how deeply stirred were the people regarding the debt question. The Richmond *Whig* was the official organ of the movement and carried reports of meetings held throughout the State.[79]

On February 25 the People's Convention assembled in Mozart Hall at Richmond. Approximately two hundred delegates were present representing some sixty counties of the State.[80] The convention was called to order by Colonel Fulkerson, chairman of the executive committee,

76 *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 96.

77 *Mahone Collection,* Scrap Books, IX, 1.

78 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 1. Seventy-five Readjusters were present at the meeting which determined on the calling of a State convention. Certain members, including Massey, thought it would be "unwise and inexpedient" to call a convention until after the conference with the creditors of the State had been concluded. However, Fulkerson, Paul, Harvie, Barbour, and others were strongly in favor of a convention and the motion was carried by a large majority. *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 2, 3.

79 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 96-98. Among the reports which appeared in the *Whig* were the following: "Cumberland Chooses!" "Lee County into Line," "Pulaski's Proclamation!" "Louisa Looming!" "Shenandoah Speaks!" "Wythe With Us!" "Mecklenburg Moves!" "Loudoun Speaks Aloud!" "Giles Jines!" "Scott Scores!" "Rockingham Rises!" "Bath Booms," "Smyth Solid!" "Warren Warlike!" "Floyd Flaming!" and "Accomack Acclaims!" *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, IX, 3-26.

80 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 98. The largest delegation appears to have come from Albemarle County. At the opening session of the convention

who nominated Captain Frank S. Blair as temporary president and Captain P. H. McCaull as secretary. The nominations were ratified by acclamation, and Captain Blair, after being introduced by Fulkerson, made a brief address regarding the purposes of the convention. Upon the motion of General Mahone a committee was appointed to report a permanent organization of the body. In accordance with the recommendations of the committee Major Volaski Vaiden, of New Kent, was elected president, and Charles M. Webber, of Roanoke, secretary. A vice-president was chosen from each of the nine Congressional districts.[81]

In the afternoon session Mahone addressed the convention regarding the State debt. He declared this to be a subject which involved "the consideration of stern realities, circumscribed by facts and figures, and not to be disposed of by sentiment and theories." Under the provisions of the Funding Bill the State was drifting toward absolute repudiation, and the only possible solution, so it seemed to him, was the readjustment of her indebtedness "on the basis of an annual interest liability within the *certain* means of the State to pay."[82] After a careful discussion of the situation, based upon statistics from the auditor's records, Mahone declared in conclusion:

> I would earnestly advise this people to accept a permanent settlement at 3 per cent., believing that they would, if called upon, see that the quiet and repose gained thereby would counterbalance the hardships of an increase which they are so little able to bear. I would use my best endeavors to secure a vote of the people sanctioning a settlement at 3 per cent. for 45 years on the basis of $32,977,090.02.—And this settlement being ratified, I would enforce it by the Legislature and courts, whose powers I believe to be fully adequate thereto. I would do so, because I believe it to be right. Because I believe it is the only way to avoid consequences we would all regret deeply. Because I believe it is to the best interest of the bondholder and the tax-payer. And because I believe it is a duty we owe to the Commonwealth of Virginia.[83]

At the evening session a stirring "Address to the People of Virginia" was delivered by H. H. Riddleberger, of Shenandoah. In his preliminary remarks he denounced "the iniquitous Funding Bill" and the evils which it had brought upon the people. In like manner he rebuked the "Debt Paying Association," the purpose of which, he affirmed, was

Massey stated "that 96 delegates were appointed from Albemarle, and that out of these fifty had already arrived, with more coming." *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, IX, 28.

81 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, IX, 28, 29.

82 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 29, 30.

83 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 31. The convention agreed that ten thousand copies of Mahone's address should be published for general distribution. *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 32.

"to frustrate your expressed will by increasing taxes to pay six per cent. on the whole debt and subject an almost exhausted people to the most hateful of dominations."[84] Particularly did he condemn the McCulloch, or Brokers' Bill, then before the General Assembly. Under its provisions, he asserted,

> the attempt is made to deprive you of real relief by a delusive measure, which by exceptions, exemptions and discriminations takes back with one hand what it purports to yield with the other; and which, without abating any of the rigors and indignities of the Funding Bill, perpetuates all of these, adding others which have been heretofore avoided, the requirements of which would still be beyond your ability to meet them, even if shorn of these odious features; and this all cloaked, veiled and tendered under a pretence of charity.[85]

Riddleberger proposed that readjustment should be established on the following principles: (1) that Virginia should assume liability for her fair proportion of the public debt, but recognize no liability for West Virginia's share; (2) that the annual interest on the indebtedness must be brought within the bounds of her revenue derived from the present rate of taxation, after deductions for the necessary expenses of government, the apportionment to the schools, and reasonable appropriations for the support of the charitable institutions of the State; (3) that there should be no tax-receivable coupons, exemptions from taxation, discrimination between creditors, or funding by intermediaries not directly under the control of the State; and (4) that any final settlement must rest upon the sovereignty of the people of the State, and be subject at any time thereafter to legislative alteration.[86]

Riddleberger's "Address" was unanimously adopted by the convention as was also the plan for a permanent organization which he presented. This plan provided for a State executive committee to be composed of three members residing at or near the city of Richmond. Provision was likewise made for a State committee to be composed of three members from each of the nine Congressional districts. There was also to be a committee for each Congressional district, county, and city in the State.[87] The State executive committee was given power to carry out the acts of the State convention, to put into operation the plans of the State committee, to decide all questions at issue in any of the election districts, and to appoint canvassers for the Congressional districts and counties. The chief function of the State committee was "to concert such measures

84 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 33.
85 *Ibid.*
86 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 34. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 99, 100.
87 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, IX, 39.

as may seem to it proper to promote the policy and effect the purposes of the organization." The duty of the Congressional, county, and city committees was "to nurture the cause and to promote the efficiency and coherent action of the organization."[88] Such a plan, if carried into effect, would provide an efficient and strongly centralized political organization. To insure its success General Mahone was appointed by the president of the convention to the dominant and strategic position of chairman of the State executive committee, which made him, at the same time ex-officio chairman of the State committee.[89]

The Readjuster Convention was indeed the "People's Convention."[90] A majority of the delegates were Conservatives of the liberal brand, but many Republicans, Greenbackers and Independents were also present.[91] A few negroes came "in response to the call which convened the people of Virginia without distinction of color."[92] Many spontaneous speeches were made by delegates on the second day of the convention. One delegate enthusiastically affirmed that the convention had taken a great step forward. "We thank the '39' for the opportunity which they have given us," he said, "an opportunity which has not only been seized, but right gallantly improved."[93] "God bless old Mahone," another exclaimed, "I will love him as long as I live for his gallant stand in behalf of the people."[94] Riddleberger sounded a battle cry when he shouted, "Don't leave a Funder on the field."[95] And Fulkerson expressed the fond hope of all who were present when he declared, "We shall now have a Legislature, backed by a united people, which neither Governor, nor Supreme Court, can withstand."[96]

On March 28, 1879, approximately a month after the Readjuster

88 *Ibid.*

89 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 101, 102.

90 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, IX, 28.

91 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 98, 99.

92 The statement of William T. Jefferson, a negro delegate from New Kent, is of interest: "As to the debt, we don't want to pay a cent of it. We think we paid our share of it, if it ever was justly chargeable upon us, by long years of servitude. And then, as Virginia has been reconstructed in her territory and in her government, we think that her debt should be reconstructed too. (Applause.) We are humble citizens—the humblest in the Commonwealth—and we treat white people invariably with a great deal more courtesy than we receive, because we are anxious not to offend you, and to win your good will. We are for peace, and we accept the overture made to us as heartily as it is tendered, for we feel that your interests and our interests are identical." (Applause.) *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, IX, 37.

93 *Ibid.*

94 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 36.

95 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 38.

96 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 35.

Convention, the McCulloch Act became a law.[97] It embodied the concessions suggested by both the New York bankers and brokers acting through the Funding Association of the United States of America, and the Council of Foreign Bondholders of London.[98] The Act was passed after a full and free discussion. The Independents almost unanimously opposed it, the Republicans were evenly divided, and the Conservatives gave it their hearty support.[99]

The McCulloch Act divided the State debt into two classes. In class one were the "consols" and convertible registered bonds, and in class two were the "peelers" and one-half of the interest unpaid since 1871. Provision was made for the funding of these classes in the proportion of at least two of the former to one of the latter, this being the ratio of the outstanding "consols" and "peelers." The new bonds were to mature in not less than ten, and not more than forty years. They were to bear interest at the rate of three per cent for the first ten years, four per cent for the next twenty years, and five per cent for the remaining ten years. Tax-receivable coupons were to be attached to the bonds, but neither the bonds nor coupons were taxable. The exclusive privilege of funding was granted to the Council of Foreign Bondholders and to the Funding Association of the United States in case they should accept the terms of the Act by May 1, 1879, and fund at least eight million dollars by January 1, 1880, and at least five million dollars semi-annually thereafter. With the new bonds, certificates were to be issued for West Virginia's third of the original debt, and the acceptance of these was to constitute a complete and final release of Virginia's obligation thereon. Beginning in 1885 a tax of two cents was to be levied on all real and personal property, the proceeds of which were to be credited to the sinking fund and applied annually, or even oftener, to the retirement of the bonds.[100] The General Assembly was to provide for the prompt payment of the interest on the bonds. If money was lacking for this purpose it was to be secured by temporary loans—or even by the sale of certificates which would bear no interest but would be receivable for all taxes, debts and demands due the State.[101] The adoption of this Act nullified the Bocock-Fowler Act of March 14, 1878, and all other acts inconsistent with its provisions.[102]

97 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 87.

98 *Ibid.,* pp. 85, 86.

99 *Ibid.,* pp. 87, 88. Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 191.

100 *Riddleberger Papers.* "The McCulloch Bill."

101 This drastic provision, constituting Section 12 of the bill, was known as the "Allen Amendment." Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 86, 87.

102 *Riddleberger Papers.* "The McCulloch Bill."

In conjunction with the McCulloch Act the Henkel School Bill was passed on March 3, 1879.[103] This Act, proposed by D. W. Henkel, a Readjuster from the Valley, had received but scant attention while the McCulloch Act was being drafted. Then, supported by both the friends of the public school system and the adherents of the McCulloch Bill, it passed both houses without opposition. It took cognizance of the distressing condition of the schools, and required all county and city collectors to reserve out of the taxes which were paid them in cash, three-fourths of the county's or city's estimated quota of the State's appropriation to schools—this sum to be administered by school officials only.[104]

The McCulloch Act, if it could be successfully executed, promised to materially lighten the fiscal burden of the State. For this reason it was accorded "remarkably consistent support" by the leading classes and by many friends of the public schools.[105] The complete execution of the bill, however, depended upon the good faith of the funding monopolists and, at the same time, upon the ability of the State to meet the new interest payments promptly. The Readjusters, not entirely without reason, were most apprehensive regarding the intentions of the monopolists. They were firmly convinced, too, that the State could not possibly meet the interest payments except by increasing the taxes, or by sacrificing the schools and charitable institutions of the State.[106] It was with this thought in mind that Riddleberger, in addressing the Readjuster Convention, described the McCulloch Act as "a delusive measure, which by exceptions, exemptions and discriminations takes back with one hand what it purports to yield with the other . . . . . the requirements of which would still be beyond your ability to meet."[107]

When the Readjusters and Funders began their struggle for legislative control in 1879 there were determined members in both camps. Chief among the Readjusters were General Mahone, from the Southside, John E. (Parson) Massey, from Piedmont, and W. C. Elam, a native of North

103 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 258.

104 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 87.

105 *Ibid.,* pp. 88, 89, 94.

106 *Ibid.,* pp. 89-94.

107 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, IX, 33. On March 18, 1879, James Barbour, of Culpeper, delivered an address in the House of Delegates in opposition to the "Brokers' Bill." *Ibid.* Scrap Books, VIII, 67. Referring to the McCulloch Bill, Squires says, "To read the bill half a century after makes the blood boil. Of all harsh, unjust, unreasonable propositions that could be loaded upon the backs of an over-burdened and prostrate people, this was the limit." Squires, *Through Centuries Three,* p. 529. For a more lenient attitude regarding the bill, see Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 191, 192.

Carolina, now serving as editor of the Richmond *Whig*. Hardly less prominent in the movement were Colonel Abram Fulkerson of the Southwest, H. H. Riddleberger and John Paul of the Valley, and James Barbour of Piedmont. The Funders had many loyal adherents but no leaders as conspicuous and colorful as Mahone and Massey. Among their most prominent members should be mentioned John Randolph Tucker of Lexington, John Goode of Norfolk, John W. Daniel of Lynchburg and J. L. M. Curry of Richmond. In General W. C. Wickham the Funders had a Republican ally of considerable influence. The leading organs in support of the Funders were the Richmond *State* and the Richmond *Dispatch*.[108]

The chief issue in the campaign was the debt question, and upon this point the old party lines no longer obtained. The Funders desired to use the name and organization of the Conservative party but the State committee was reluctant to commit itself wholly to this faction. Particularly did it hesitate to take such a drastic step in view of the fact that the Readjusters maintained that they were still members of the party and had dared to call a convention only because the Funder faction of the Conservative party had failed to carry out the will of the people regarding the debt. Not until August did the Conservative State Committee venture to identify itself with the Funders and those who supported the McCulloch Act, and even then the decision encountered marked opposition in the committee.[109] On August 7, 1879, an address of the State central committee of the Conservative party was issued by John T. Lovell, chairman, and J. Bell Bigger, secretary.[110] It defended the McCulloch Act as a conservative measure, and denounced the Readjusters who, in the Mozart Convention, had pledged themselves "to resist the McCulloch Bill, no matter by what imposing weight of Conservative judgment the bill should be passed."[111] The organization and activity of the Readjusters, it affirmed, could lead to but one conclusion —"that this faction is seeking to rule or ruin the Conservative party. If they succeed in their plans the disruption and downfall of our party is inevitable."[112]

It was true that the Readjuster movement was being pushed with

108 For an excellent treatment of "Sections and Leaders, 1879," see Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* Chapter IX. Also see Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 194, 195.

109 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 119, 120.

110 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, X, 155-169.

111 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, X, 165.

112 *Ibid.*

vigor by General Mahone and those who were closely associated with him.[113] Mahone's administrative ability was peculiarly fitted to his task as party chairman and the powers conferred upon him by that position gave him an opportunity for unrestricted and aggressive action.[114] He was an organizer *par excellence,* and his energy and enthusiasm were transmitted to younger men of ability and ambition who served as his lieutenants throughout the State.[115] Mahone's headquarters were at the *Whig* office in Richmond where he worked in close conjunction with W. C. Elam, editor of the *Whig,* and secretary of the Readjuster State Executive Committee.[116]

One of the most interesting features of the campaign of 1879 was the public meeting. Throughout the State these gatherings were attended with zest and enthusiasm by those who desired to hear an address by a representative of the Readjusters, or of the Funders, or perhaps by representatives of both factions in joint debate.[117] These discussions generally centered around three questions—the validity of the State debt, the provisions of the McCulloch Act, and the purposes of the Readjuster party.[118] In joint discussions no speaker could surpass, and few could equal, Parson Massey. His common sense, quaint humor, ready wit, and imperturbability under attack made him a favorite with audiences in all sections of the State.[119]

As the campaign progressed Mahone kept in close touch with the

113 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 119. Squires, *Land of Decision.* p. 192.

114 Mahone had been gladly welcomed into the ranks of the Readjusters by Fulkerson and Massey both because of his prestige in the State and also because of the organizing ability which he had displayed as early as the Walker gubernatorial campaign in 1869. Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone," 1889, p. 2.

115 O'Ferrall, a contemporary of Mahone, affirms that he was a "superior organizer and leader of men." He further states that Mahone possessed great personal magnetism and will power. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 211. Quite to the contrary Pearson declares that Mahone "lacked magnetism and was never genuinely popular with the rank and file." Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 114. O'Ferrall stresses the fact that Mahone sought to promote the cause of readjustment by working through young men of talent and political ambition. These men were inspired with the spirit of revolt against existing conditions, and were urged to supersede the old Bourbon rule by the organization of a progressive party which would enact legislation in accordance with the desires of the people. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 211.

116 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, X, 55. *Ibid.* Printed Letters, W. C. Elam, Headquarters Executive Committee, "Whig" Office, to Readjuster Canvassers, Sept. 3, 1879.

117 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 120, 121.

118 *Ibid.,* pp. 121-126.

119 *Ibid.,* p. 113. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* Chapter XIV.

political situation, and directed the activity of the Readjuster leaders. Writing to Riddleberger on September 24, 1879, he said:

> You observe that it is the game of the opposition to flood your District, Paul's, Massey's, Fulkerson's and Blair's especially, not so much in any hope of defeating you as for the purpose of bottling you up. This was in advance proclaimed to be their policy and you strike the key note in your reply when you say that you intend to make your canvass aggressive and invade other territory.[120]

In accordance with this letter Mahone drew up a schedule of appointments for Riddleberger which included Norfolk, Petersburg and other strategic places in Southside Virginia.[121] Colorful letters were received by Mahone from Massey,[122] who was particularly active during the campaign, and from Fulkerson,[123] Paul[124] and many others[125] regarding the canvass in different sections of the State.[126]

Not only did Mahone direct the canvass but he traveled about through the State and engaged in public discussions from time to time.[127] In reference to the political meeting at Charlottesville Massey wrote to Mahone, "I want you to lead off with your convincing facts, figures & arguments. The whole Funding party can't refute them."[128] And a Read-

120 *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, Sept. 24, 1879. At the close of the letter Mahone adds, "I had a splendid day at Halifax, left our friends rejoicing—and the outlook there is that we shall join [sic] both Delegates & the Senator."

121 *Ibid.* Idem to Idem, Sept. 26, 1879. During the campaign Riddleberger also prepared a public letter on the debt which was addressed to the editors of the *Page Courier,* a Readjuster paper. *Mahone Collection,* Scrap Books, X, 27-32.

122 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John E. Massey, Ash Lawn, Virginia, to William Mahone, Oct. 1, 15, 1879. In the former letter one gets an insight into Massey's activity during the canvass as well as a reference to the manner in which he combined the duties of "parson" and politician. He writes, "I met Ex-Gov. Smith & Curry in Harrisonburg on Monday the 29th ult[imo]. It was their meeting and they closed; but our friends were much gratified at the result, & claimed decided gains. I had to go to Staunton in the night by private conveyance, thence by night train to Charlottesville; thence home & to Palmyra, or near it, marry my son, accompany him & bride to Ch[arlottes]v[ille] for Washington; then home—75 miles by private and 40 by public conveyance in 24 hours, without sleep, after speaking 2½ hours."

123 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Abram Fulkerson, Bristol, to William Mahone, Sept. 6, 11, 12, 1879.

124 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John Paul, Harrisonburg, to William Mahone, June 18, 1879.

125 From Suffolk came the message, "We have got the Funders down and we want to keep our feet on them." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. W. Rawles, Suffolk, to William Mahone, Sept. 16, 1879.

126 The Funders had several speakers who participated actively in the campaign, among whom were Colonel L. D. Starke and Major W. T. Taliaferro. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, X, 35-37.

127 In the campaign of 1879, according to Pearson, "Mahone was everywhere—planning, speaking, bargaining." Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 115.

128 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John E. Massey, Ash Lawn, Virginia, to William Mahone, Aug. 31, 1879.

juster from Leesburg wrote to him, "The simple announcement that you will speak will insure a large, a very large audience. . . . The people of the County are anxious to see and hear you. Your name strikes terror to the Funders here."[129]

Not until relatively late in the campaign was the negro vote given serious attention. At first neither the Funders nor the Readjusters made an active bid for their support,[130] notwithstanding the fact that late in 1878 the Funder "Committee of 39" had invited the coöperation of "every citizen of Virginia," without regard to party or color, "to preserve the credit of the State;"[131] and that at the Readjuster convention in February, 1879, several negroes were present "in response to the call which convened the people of Virginia without distinction of color."[132] However, in September, Massey delivered a speech in Petersburg in which the negroes were invited to coöperate with the Readjusters and were promised more "rights" than would be granted them by the Funders. Similar appeals were made by other Readjuster speakers, and various religious and social organizations helped to circulate their promises. Similar tactics were quickly adopted by the Funders and in a number of counties an effort was made to divide the negro vote by running Republican candidates. As a rule, however, the Funders were far less successful in winning the support of the negroes than were the Readjusters.[133]

The campaign of 1879 resulted in a great victory for the Readjusters who won fifty-six of the hundred seats in the House of Delegates and twenty-four of the forty seats in the Senate.[134] The election returns revealed the strength of the Readjusters among the whites and Conservatives of the Southwest and the Valley, and among the negroes and Republicans of the Tidewater and Southside. Only from the whites and Conservatives of northern and western Piedmont did the Funders receive consistent and predominant support.[135] Walker described the

129 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, C. P. McCable, Leesburg, to William Mahone, Oct. 1, 1879.

130 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 127, 128.

131 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, VIII, 59.

132 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 37.

133 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 128. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 195, 196.

134 The *Warrock-Richardson Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina Almanack for the year of our Lord 1880.* Calculated by R. K. Bowles of Louisa County, Virginia, Richmond, 1880. Eleven negroes were elected to the House of Delegates and two to the Senate. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 196.

135 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 130.

victory as "a big thing—unprecedented."[136] Another friend of readjustment congratulated Mahone on the preëminent part he had played "in this mighty effort of the people."[137] And John S. Wise wrote, "I think you hardly appreciate how fraught with big consequences to you in every way was the fight you made."[138]

Regarding the election in Virginia and its relation to national affairs John Tyler, Jr., addressed the following significant letter to President Rutherford B. Hayes and John Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury, on November 8:

> I am confirmed this morning in the statements I made to you last night orally, as to the real character of the late contest in Virginia, and the true meaning of the result there. The issue made as to the public debt was not an issue for "honest payment" on the one side, and "repudiation" on the other, as was industriously disseminated by the Bourbon Ring Masters in Richmond. Far from it. Those thus stigmatized as "Repudiators" by the Bourbons, are not opposed to the payment of the debt any more than their adversaries. The real issue thus sought to be disguised was between those with General Mahone advocating the policy of placing the State upon the line of progressive advancement in accordance with the spirit of the age and the Nation, and the Bourbons struggling in antagonism to both. The contest has ended in the complete overthrow of the Bourbons, with the Republicans holding the balance of power in the Legislature. The situation is, therefore, every way inviting for the recovery of the State, at length, to our great National interests, with all her moral prestige and historical impress.[139]

One of the first and most important duties of the General Assembly in December, 1879, was the election of a United States Senator to succeed Robert E. Withers whose term of office would expire in March, 1881. Withers hoped to succeed himself and was the logical nominee of the Funders. Mahone's preëminent position among the Readjusters and the success of the recent campaign made him the overwhelming choice of the Readjusters. General Williams C. Wickham was the leading figure among the Republicans.[140] There was little hope of his

136 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Nov. 6, 1879.

137 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. A. Finnell, Bentonville, Virginia, to William Mahone, Nov. 13, 1879.

138 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, Richmond, to William Mahone, Nov. 9, 1879.

139 *Ibid.* Manuscripts. A copy of this letter was sent to General Mahone by John Tyler, Junior, on Dec. 6, 1879. John Tyler, Junior, was a son of President Tyler, and served as his father's private secretary during his entire term of office. He early became a Republican and was in complete sympathy with the Readjuster Movement in Virginia. His correspondence with General Mahone reveals a close affiliation with Republican leaders at Washington. Richard A. Wise declared that he was particularly effective among the negro voters and should be used by the Readjusters in the campaign of 1880. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Richard A. Wise, Williamsburg, to Judge B. W. Lacy, Sept. 2, 1880.

140 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 43.

election, however, and the chief significance of the Republican vote was that it constituted the balance of power in the Legislature. On December, 6, 1879, Tyler wrote to Mahone, "I think that there will be, ultimately, although not entirely yet, a concentration of all the Republicans upon you."[141] This, in effect, is what happened, although the election of Mahone to the Senate was unquestionably the result of a majority opinion in the General Assembly that a Readjuster, and not a Funder, should represent Virginia there.[142] When the joint ballot was cast on December 16, Mahone received seventy-nine votes, Withers fifty-three, Wickham five and John W. Daniel one, or a total of seventy-nine to fifty-nine for Mahone.[143]

Having won a great victory within the State, Mahone was eager that the Readjusters should keep their organization intact in the national election of 1880.[144] Accordingly, he desired that the Readjusters should nominate independent Congressional candidates and an independent electoral ticket. However, seeing that Virginia Republicans were strongly in favor of nominating Grant for the Presidency, Mahone now suggested a fusion "on the basis of six Readjuster and five Republican electors pledged to Grant."[145] When this overture was refused, Mahone called a Readjuster convention which nominated an electoral ticket pledged to Hancock, the Democratic candidate.[146] The election of 1880 was, therefore, very much confused by the existence of three electoral tickets, the Funder-Hancock, the Readjuster-Hancock, and the Republican-Garfield, and by three candidates in many of the Congressional districts.[147] The campaign resulted in the election of two Read-

141 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John Tyler, Junior, Washington, to William Mahone, Dec. 6, 1879.

142 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 135. Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 43.

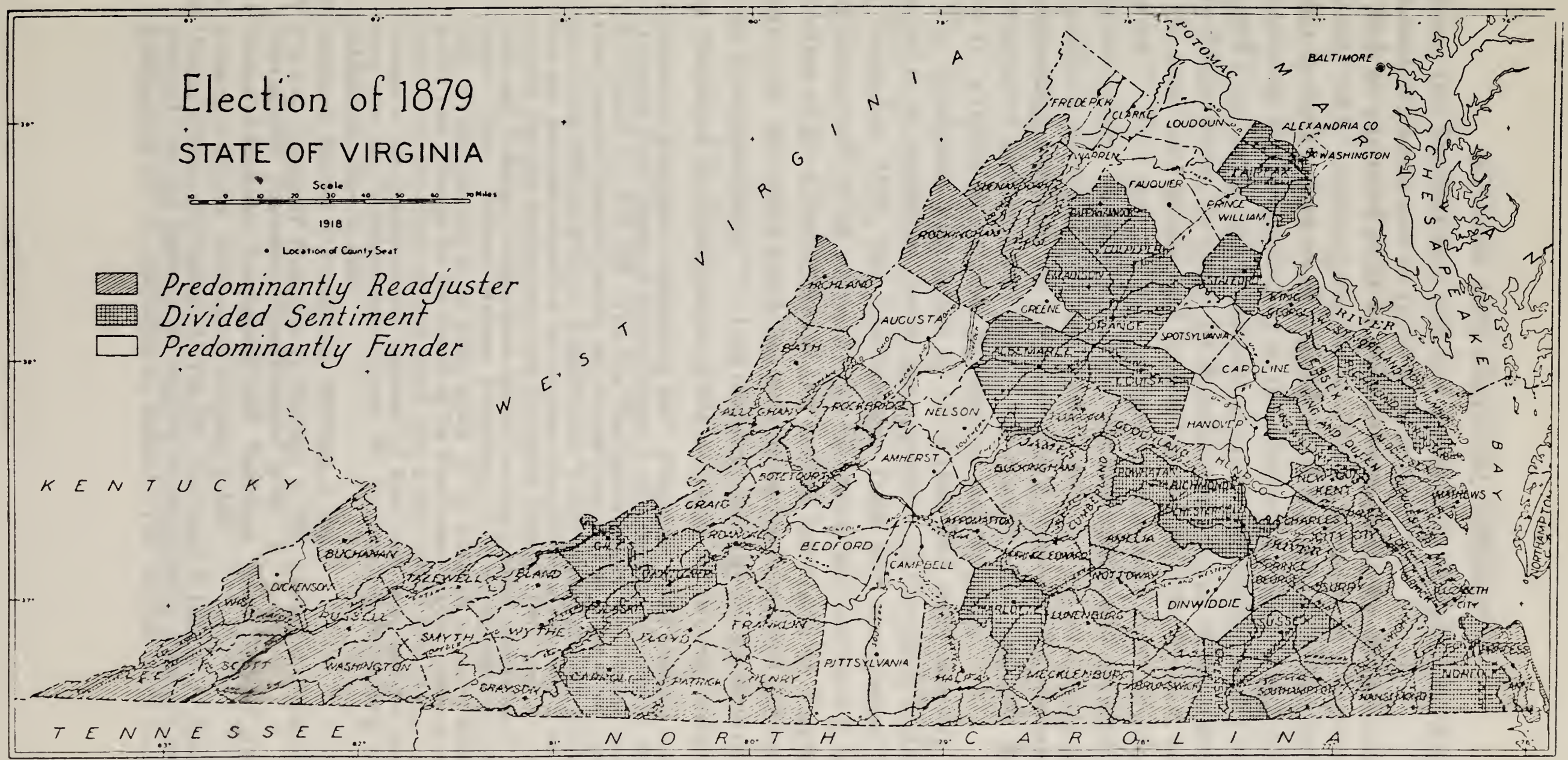
143 In the Senate Mahone was nominated by John Paul. The vote for Mahone was twenty-three; for Robert E. Withers, thirteen; for Williams C. Wickham, three; and for John W. Daniel, one. *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia; begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond, on Wednesday, December 3, 1879, being the one hundred and fourth year of the Commonwealth,* Richmond, 1879, p. 58. In the House of Delegates Mahone was nominated by Thomas H. Cross. The vote for Mahone was fifty-six; for Robert E. Withers, forty; and for Williams C. Wickham, two. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia for the session of 1879-80,* Richmond, 1879, pp. 59, 60.

144 Conversations with Senator Carter Glass, Lynchburg, Virginia.

145 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 136, 137.

146 *Ibid.,* p. 137.

147 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XIII, 116.


Election of 1879
STATE OF VIRGINIA
Scale
1918
Location of County Seat
Predominantly Readjuster
Divided Sentiment
Predominantly Funder
WEST VIRGINIA
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
NORTH CAROLINA
MARYLAND
CHESAPEAKE BAY
POTOMAC RIVER
BALTIMORE
ALEXANDRIA CO
WASHINGTON
FREDERICK
CLARKE
LOUDOUN
WARREN
FAUQUIER
PRINCE WILLIAM
ROCKINGHAM
HIGHLAND
AUGUSTA
GREENE
ORANGE
SPOTSYLVANIA
CAROLINE
BATH
ALLEGHANY
ROCKBRIDGE
NELSON
AMHERST
HANOVER
BOTETOURT
CRAIG
BEDFORD
CAMPBELL
BUCKINGHAM
AMELIA
DINWIDDIE
LUNENBURG
MECKLENBURG
PITTSYLVANIA
FRANKLIN
PATRICK
HENRY
FLOYD
WYTHE
SMYTH
BLAND
TAZEWELL
BUCHANAN
DICKENSON
RUSSELL
WASHINGTON
GRAYSON
SCOTT
LEE
NORTHAMPTON
NORFOLK
SOUTHAMPTON
SURRY
PRINCE GEORGE
CHARLES CITY
NEW KENT
KING AND QUEEN
ESSEX
MATHEWS
ELIZABETH CITY
HANSEMOND
BRUNSWICK
HALIFAX
CUMBERLAND
NOTTOWAY
APPOMATTOX
ROANOKE
GILES
CARROLL
ALBEMARLE
LOUISA
JAMES
GOOCHLAND
HENRICO
CHESTERFIELD
RICHMOND
WESTMORELAND
NORTHUMBERLAND
LANCASTER
MIDDLESEX
KING GEORGE
STAFFORD
CULPEPER
MADISON
RAPPAHANNOCK
SHENANDOAH
FAIRFAX

justers, two Republicans, and five Funders to Congress.[148] Virginia's electoral vote was cast in favor of Hancock.[149]

Mahone's term of office as Senator began with the special session of March, 1881. Declaring that he had been elected to this important position by the Readjusters of Virginia, Mahone renounced any obligation whatsoever to the Funders or to the Democratic party which had supported them in the recent national election. By casting his lot with the Republican party, he gave the Republicans control of the Senate and at the same time placed that body in accord with the Federal administration.[150] This was a most momentous and significant decision that Mahone made. It gained for him the friendship and support of the Republican administration and placed him at once in a strategic and commanding position. At the same time it increased the venom of the Conservative elements throughout the country who promptly branded him as "a traitor to his State, his section, and his party."[151]

The Readjuster Legislature of 1879-1880 had been severely handicapped in its operations due to the opposition of Governor Holliday.[152] In December, 1879, the Riddleberger Debt Bill was passed by the Legislature only to be vetoed by the Governor who declared it to be in violation of the Constitution of the United States and of Virginia and contrary to "the spirit which has ever moved and inspired the traditions of the Commonwealth."[153] This manifest hostility on the part of Holliday convinced the Readjusters of the necessity of electing a Readjuster

148 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 45-47. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 212. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 137, 138. The two Readjusters elected to Congress were John Paul from the Seventh District and Abram Fulkerson from the Ninth. Regarding the election Mahone wrote to Riddleberger, "I have desired to write you for many days but have had scarcely a day's repose since the dread disaster. I am heartily rejoiced that you carried your own Senatorial District. This and the election of Paul and Fulkerson compensates largely for the general miscarriage." *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, Nov. 18, 1880. Of interest, too, is the letter which W. E. Cameron wrote to Riddleberger at this time. Except for the defeat of his Readjuster friends, Cameron wrote, "I could survey the whole scene of wreck with a smile at the folly of the wise & the wisdom of the simple—at the weakness of those who won, and the strength of those who lost." *Riddleberger Papers.* W. E. Cameron, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, Nov. 5, 1880.

149 Stanwood, *History of Presidential Elections,* p. 373.

150 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 138. Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 47.

151 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 47.

152 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 142.

153 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 196, 197. On March 8, 1880, H. H. Riddleberger delivered a stirring speech in the Virginia Senate regarding Holliday's veto of the Readjustment bill. In concluding, he declared, "This veto will carry our party on

governor and Legislature in the fall of 1881 if they were to carry out their ambitious program of reform. As early as November, 1880, shortly after the disappointing campaign of that year, Mahone wrote to Riddleberger:

> If the Readjuster party would win the next Governor, Legislature and State officers they must prepare *now* for the contest. The Funders will not yield without a mighty struggle, bringing to their aid every element of opposition to Readjustment. To meet and countermine these efforts the Readjusters in every county must organize—repair breeches—restore broken lines—recall absentees—brighten their armor and be ready to strife [sic] for the fight.[154]

On January 4, 1881, the program of the Readjusters was outlined by General Mahone in an address of the State committee to the Readjuster party of the State.[155] The issues to be faced were primarily the same as those in 1879. The aim of the Readjusters, he said, "will be to secure the Executive offices of the State, but above all the Legislature, which elects a successor to the Hon. John W. Johnston; a Court of Appeals, and all the State officers."[156] On March 23 a meeting of the committee was held to make arrangements for the State convention.[157] In accordance with its decision, a call was issued to the Readjusters of Virginia to elect delegates to the convention at Richmond on Thursday, June 2, 1881.[158]

When the delegates assembled in Richmond the two leading candidates for the nomination were Parson Massey of Albemarle, and William E. Cameron, Mayor of Petersburg.[159] Massey was extremely popular throughout the State, but Mahone was understood to oppose his nomination.[160] Mahone's preference, apparently, was Riddleberger

a tide of prosperity for two years, and we shall sweep the State—making Readjustment a fixed achievement against all combinations, all machinations, all the powers that can be mustered against us. We are for the people, and the people are for us and with us!" *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XIII, 25-28.

154 *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, Nov. 25, 1880.

155 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXII, 34.

156 *Ibid.*

157 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXII, 4.

158 In issuing the call Mahone wrote, "Readjusters, the hour of our final deliverance from speculation, poverty, and agitation is at hand. Peace, thrift, and prosperity should be our watchwords. . . . We have now to go forward with the same spirit and determination that have characterized our people in the past, and final and complete triumph of our cause is already assured." *Ibid.*

159 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XX, 66.

160 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 202. According to Massey, Mahone favored his nomination for the governorship until he discovered that Massey refused to be subject to his will if elected to this position. After this time Mahone and Massey had little to do with one another. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* pp. 193, 194.

for governor and V. D. Groner of Norfolk for lieutenant governor.[161] John S. Wise was presented for the governorship by the Richmond Readjusters.[162] And for a brief time even Mahone's name was placed before the convention.[163] After the fourth ballot had been taken, a strong movement in favor of Cameron was inaugurated. To check a stampede in his favor the friends of Massey asked permission to retire. The privilege was granted, and upon the return of the delegation Massey moved that the nomination of Cameron be made unanimous.[164] This was done "with a yell that was prolonged for nearly 15 minutes."[165] Hon. John F. Lewis of Rockingham was nominated for lieutenant governor and Captain Frank S. Blair of Wythe for attorney general.[166]

The Funder Convention met in Richmond on August 6, 1881.[167] The delegates appeared indifferent and apathetic until roused by a stirring speech of Ned Dandridge of Winchester on behalf of Major John W. Daniel. The names of all other candidates were withdrawn and Daniel was nominated by acclamation.[168] James Barbour of Culpeper, the "original Readjuster," was nominated for lieutenant governor, and P. W. McKinney of Prince Edward, for attorney general.[169]

161 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone," p. 2. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* p. 195. Among the *Riddleberger Papers* is a very poorly preserved manuscript, apparently written by Riddleberger in 1889. It concludes, "A Convention was called in the summer following (1881) and Cameron, the bitterest antagonist in all relations Mahone had theretofore had, was nominated for Governor and elected by over twelve thousand majority. Charity suggests that General Mahone may have forgotten that he sent one of his most trusted friends to me requesting license to use my name to beat Cameron for Governor, a tempting offer which was courteously declined. This is only a reminder to the General that he has *not* made all the Governors in Virginia."

162 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 139. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* p. 195.

163 Mahone was nominated for the governorship by Richard A. Wise without his previous knowledge or consent. His name was withdrawn at his own request. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XX, 66.

164 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* pp. 195-197.

165 *Mahone Collection,* Scrap Books, XX, 66.

166 Various newspaper reports of the Readjuster nominating convention are found in the *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XX, 64-70.

167 Squires, *Through Centuries Three,* p. 534.

168 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* pp. 212, 213.

169 Richmond *Whig,* Aug. 6, 1881. "In 1881," writes John S. Barbour, "the Readjuster Republican party nominated Cameron, a pronounced Readjuster, for governor, and the Democrats in an effort to harmonize the party nominated for governor, John W. Daniel, a pronounced Funder, and nominated my father, a pronounced Readjuster as lieutenant governor, and McKinney for attorney general, on a compromise platform." *Personal Papers.* John S. Barbour, Washington, to N. M. Blake, July 22, 1930.

The Funder platform advocated "equality of right and exact justice to all men," "the maintenance of the public credit of Virginia," and the integrity of the public school system "for the education of both white and colored children." It called for "the cooperation of all Conservative-Democrats, whatever may have been or now are their views upon the public debt, in the election of the nominees of this convention and in the maintenance of the supremacy of the Democratic party in this State."[170]

The Richmond *Whig* lost no time in pointing out the fact that the Funder candidates were "*all in a huddle,* hardly out of sight and call of Richmond!"[171] By their selection the Valley, Southwest and Tidewater had been ignored and slighted. The Readjuster candidates, on the other hand, might well be said to represent the Tidewater, Piedmont, Valley and Southwest.[172] The Richmond *Dispatch,* however, took a very different attitude toward the nicely calculated balance of the Readjuster ticket when it said, "There's Cameron, he's for the Democrats; and there's Lewis, he's for the negroes; and there's Blair, he's for the Greenback lunatics."[173]

The struggle between Cameron and Daniel led to one of the most spirited political campaigns in Virginia history. Both men were excellent speakers, Cameron excelling in debate and Daniel in oratory.[174] Several times during the canvass they appeared together and engaged in joint debates.[175] Throughout the campaign the Readjusters emphasized the question of public schools. Daniel was charged with the assertion that it would be better for the State to burn the schools than to pass a tax bill which he feared would lead to repudiation.[176] The Readjusters, on the other hand, presented statistics to show how they had encouraged and supported the public schools since gaining control of the Legislature.[177]

Mahone was eternally vigilant during the campaign. From the

170 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXIII, 5-7.

171 Richmond *Whig,* Aug. 9, 1881.

172 Since Cameron resided in Petersburg, the *Whig* declared that he "equally represents the Tidewater and the Piedmont regions." *Ibid.*

173 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 139.

174 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 214.

175 *Ibid.,* p. 213. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXIII, 17, 18, 45, 46.

176 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXIII, 1, 7, 9. "Now for a torchlight procession, and a general bonfire of schoolhouses, with Daniel in the lead!" Richmond *Whig,* Aug. 5, 1881. "That CAMERON, LEWIS, and BLAIR can and will defeat this torchlight procession is as certain as that the sun shines in the heavens." Richmond *Whig,* Aug. 6, 1881.

177 The statistics presented were as follows:

headquarters of the State executive committee in the Whig Building he directed the canvass and issued order after order to workers in various parts of the State.[178] On June 24 he reminded the Readjuster leaders that "money is required to defray the necessary expenses incident to the canvass," and declared that "the people expect their leaders —and especially those upon whom they have conferred office—however little the emolument—will intervene with such help as seems reasonable and proper they should render."[179] By September Mahone was convinced that the Funders no longer entertained any hope of electing their State ticket and were concentrating their efforts on the Legislature. In a letter, dated September 2, the canvassers were challenged to renewed activity by the declaration that

> it is upon the Legislature that the success of Readjustment depends—the settlement of the debt, the preservation of the free schools, the election of a Court of Appeals for twelve years and a United States Senator, and the repeal of the prerequisite—the payment of one dollar before the citizen can vote.[180]

The campaign came to a close in November and resulted in the election of Cameron by a majority of 11,716 in a total vote of 211,-230.[181] The Readjusters were likewise successful in maintaining their control in both houses of the Legislature. The issues in 1881 had been very much the same as in 1879 and the campaign resulted in a similar victory for the Readjusters.[182] H. H. Riddleberger, Mahone's intimate friend, was elected United States Senator to succeed Honorable John W. Johnston.[183] A new bench of Judges was elected by the Legislature to

	1879 Last Year of Funder Rule	1880 First Year of Re-Adjuster Rule
No. of Schools	2,491	4,854
Graded	128	205
Pupils	108,074	220,736
Teachers	2,504	4,873
Expenditures	$570,389.15	$946,109.33
Colored Teachers	415	785
Colored Schools	675	1,256
Colored Pupils	35,768	68,600

Mahone Collection. Scrap Books, XXIII, 6. Other statistics of a similar nature are found in the *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XVII, 8, 9.

178 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXII, 15-18.

179 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXII, 21.

180 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXII, 25.

181 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 214. The figures regarding the vote vary. The *Warrock-Richardson Almanack for the year 1888* states that Cameron received 113,473 votes and Daniel 100,758, or a majority of 12,715 for Cameron.

182 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 130, 141.

183 On December 2, 1881, John S. Wise had written to Riddleberger, "I feel pretty

the Supreme Court of Appeals. And, in addition, the Readjusters took charge of all the public institutions of the State which recently had been under the control of the Funder element.[184]

In 1882 the Readjusters were at the zenith of their power. Their control of the State offices, the Legislature and the courts gave them an opportunity to carry out the "high mission" to which they had been elected by the people.[185] Chief among the legislative enactments was the Riddleberger Debt Law, a modified form of the Riddleberger Bill of 1880 which Governor Holliday had promptly vetoed. This Act was approved by Governor Cameron on February 14, 1882, and immediately went into effect.[186] According to its provisions West Virginia was held responsible for one-third of the principal and accrued interest, as of July 1, 1863, and certificates of credit were issued which were "to be accounted for by the state of West Virginia, without recourse upon this commonwealth." According to the official records of the second auditor's office it was demonstrated that the debt principal, after all proper deductions had been made, was $16,843,034.17. The interest due was placed at $4,192,342.98, making the total debt, as of July 1, 1882, $21,035,377.15. New bonds were issued, dated July 1, 1882, which should mature in not less than eighteen and not more than fifty years. These were to be exchanged for the various types of outstanding bonds and were to bear three per cent interest in lawful money. In no other form whatsoever were payments of interest on the debt to be made.[187]

In conjunction with the Riddleberger Debt Law two acts, known as "coupon-killers" were passed by the Readjusters early in 1882.[188] According to these acts cash must be presented with coupons when they were used for the payment of taxes. If the coupons were found to be genuine the cash would be returned. The purpose of the acts was to

good tonight & I want to help make you feel good. Mahone is for you for the Senate. So am I. Just as he is for you so am I." *Riddleberger Papers.* John S. Wise, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, Dec. 2, 1881.

184 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 50, 51.

185 *Ibid.,* p. 51. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 142.

186 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 142.

187 *Riddleberger Papers.* "The Riddleberger Debt Law." The new bonds created under the Riddleberger Debt Law soon became known as "Riddlebergers." Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 142, 143. These bonds and coupons were not exempt from taxation, nor could the coupons be used in the payment of taxes. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 204. By the terms of this Act "Thirteen millions in principal and thirty-five millions in interest were thus saved to the State and taxpayers." Library of Congress, *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 52.

188 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 203, 204.

discourage the use of coupons on foreign bonds in payment of taxes and to encourage the conversion of "consols" and "ten-forties" into Riddleberger bonds. These acts, together with the Riddleberger Debt Law, would unquestionably result in uniformity and definiteness of obligations and a substantial reduction in the annual interest burden.[189]

Many reforms were made in connection with taxation, the general tendency being to lighten the burdens of the laborer and farmer and to reach out more definitely in the field of corporate wealth.[190] The general property tax was reduced from fifty to forty cents, and realty was reassessed at a reduction of $13,000,000.00.[191] Effective methods were employed in the collection of delinquent taxes and the adjustment of State claims against the railroads. As a result of these measures the Readjusters found themselves in possession of an abundance of funds which they proceeded to spend with considerable prodigality.[192]

Public education was the principal object of Readjuster liberality.[193] By the Riddleberger Debt Law the literary fund was placed in the most favored class of creditors, and it was directed that its share of the arrearages of interest, to the amount of $379,270.00, should be paid in cash.[194] The Grandstaff Act superseded the Henkel School Bill and provided that ninety, rather than seventy-five, per cent of the estimated quota of the State's taxes for schools should be retained by the county authorities.[195] Regular quarterly payments of $25,000.00, and a special payment of $400,000.00, were to be made to the schools in consequence of funds which had been diverted from them in the past.[196] The receipt of $500,000.00, by the State in settlement of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad claims, made possible this payment of $400,000.00 to the schools, as well as the appropriation of $100,000.00 to the Normal and Collegiate Institute for negroes at Petersburg.[197] Aided by the liberal provisions of the Readjusters the schools recovered from

189 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 143, 144.

190 *Ibid.,* p. 144.

191 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 144. Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 52, 53.

192 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 144, 145.

193 *Ibid.,* p. 145.

194 *Riddleberger Papers.* "Riddleberger Debt Law," p. 8.

195 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 145. Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 53.

196 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 145, 146.

197 *Ibid.,* p. 146.

the distressing conditions of 1879 and entered upon a period of remarkable growth and prosperity.[198]

Hardly less significant was the attitude of the Readjusters toward the humanitarian and charitable institutions of the State. Appropriations for the care of the insane were increased, making possible the removal of hundreds of lunatics from jails to asylums.[199] Money was provided for the erection of an insane asylum for negroes at Petersburg,[200] and agitation was begun for the construction of a second asylum for the whites at Staunton.[201] Appropriations to disabled Confederate soldiers were continued.[202] And Virginia's representatives at Washington were urged to support the Blair Education Bill which provided for Federal aid to the public schools of the several states.[203]

Numerous other reforms were speedily enacted by the Readjusters. Prominent among these was the adoption of a constitutional amendment which abolished the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting. It also provided that any citizen of the State who "since the adoption of this Constitution" had engaged, either directly or indirectly, in a duel, would be disqualified both for voting and office holding.[204] Significant, too, was the abolition of the whipping-post which had been used to degrade and disfranchise the negro.[205]. The State penitentiary was made self-sustaining, and much needed aid was extended to both the State Agricultural and Mechanical College and the Virginia Military Institute.[206] Legislation was passed to encourage and protect native industry, and many benevolent and fraternal organizations were chartered.[207] A genuine effort was made, it would appear, to secure "a free ballot, a full vote, and a fair count."[208]

During this period of political supremacy the Readjusters enacted all of the major legislation which they had promised the people. Several factors contributed to their remarkable achievements. First and foremost was the dynamic leadership of General Mahone. As chairman of the State executive committee and chairman ex-officio of the State cen-

198 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 53.
199 *Ibid.* Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 146.
200 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 53.
201 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 146.
202 *Ibid.*
203 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 53.
204 Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions,* VII, 3903, 3904.
205 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 53.
206 *Ibid.*
207 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 147.
208 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 53, 54.

tral committee he was the source and motive power of Readjuster activity.[209] His position as United States Senator gained for him the favor and support of the Federal administration and enabled him to strengthen the Readjuster cause by the exercise of a vast patronage.[210] The Richmond *Whig* served as the official organ of the Readjusters in disseminating information among the people and in gaining popular approval.[211] Mahone was ably assisted in his endeavors by a number of brilliant and forceful lieutenants, chief among whom were Riddleberger, Cameron, Wise, Paul and Lewis. To be sure, the Readjuster legislation was made possible because of a sympathetic Legislature, a friendly governor, and a liberal-minded judiciary. And it should be borne in mind that such a governor and Legislature were elected in 1881 because they championed the interests of a majority of the white people and negroes in the State.

There were obvious weaknesses in the Readjuster régime. Methods were resorted to which led to discord and eventually to bitter hostility, even within the Readjuster ranks.[212] In their eagerness to make reforms the Readjusters were no doubt guilty of accepting the philosophy that the end justifies the means. Funder-Democrats, who were generally referred to as Bourbons, were removed from office with reckless abandon and their places filled with Readjusters on the basis that "to the laborers belong the hire."[213] The Federal patronage was used in placing "Mahone men" in strategic positions throughout the State.[214] When the chief objectives of the Readjusters had been achieved an effort was made to fuse this party with the Republican party under the leadership of Mahone.[215] The movement was accompanied by the development of a political machine which was anathematized as "Mahoneism." In the succeeding years it was relentlessly attacked and vilified by its opponents until its complete overthrow was effected.

209 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey*, p. 194. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, p. 151.

210 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 152-154.

211 *Ibid.*, p. 152. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXIII.

212 Pendleton, *Political History of Appalachian Virginia*, p. 353.

213 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 147-150. Immediately after the Readjuster victory in November, 1879, Mahone received a letter which stated, "I am aware your views as to 'spoils' and my own are the same, to wit: 'To the laborers belong the hire.'" *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, W. E. Hinton, Junior, Petersburg, to William Mahone, Nov. 7, 1879.

214 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, p. 157. "Billy Mahone was an ardent disciple of Andrew Jackson. Like the Great Andy, so wildly applauded, he turned all funders out of office and filled their places with Readjusters. Unfortunately many of these petty officials were not worthy." Squires, *Land of Decision*, p. 193.

215 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, p. 160.

A final word should be said with regard to the Readjusters. They were not a "drove of hogs" tended by a "hog-drover,"[216] nor "a party of Repudiators composed of ignorant negroes and rascally whites,"[217] nor a group of "political beggars and tramps."[218] Their leaders were men who were willing to face facts and to deal with conditions as they found them. At a time when "Funder honor wouldn't buy a breakfast"[219] they insisted on a readjustment of the State debt in order to escape inevitable, though unwilling, repudiation.[220] In their constituency was a majority of the white population of the State. To this was added the overwhelming support of the negroes because they represented their interests to a greater degree than did the Funders.

The Readjuster legislation speaks for itself. The Riddleberger Debt Law was accepted by Funders as well as Readjusters, and approved by all the courts in which it was contested, including the Supreme Court of the United States.[221] The Readjusters deserve lasting credit, too, for their loyalty to the public schools of Virginia. In strong contrast to the apparent indifference of the Conservative leaders was their generous

216 In a speech at Winchester, Senator John Brown Gordon of Georgia likened "the would be leader in Virga. to a Tennessee Hog-Drover and the Readjusters to a drove of hogs." *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XIII, 34.

217 This statement appeared in the New York *World* on March 18, 1880. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XIII, 38.

218 This phrase was used by John W. Daniel before a group of students at the University of Virginia on April 7, 1879. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, VIII, 69.

219 This expression was first used by Frank S. Blair, but was afterwards quoted and paraphrased by both Readjusters and Funders. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 122. Conversations with Robert Cabaniss, Petersburg, Virginia.

220 General Grant's statement to George C. Gorham regarding the Funder-Readjuster controversy gives a fairly accurate picture of the situation: "As I understand it," he said, "the debt payers have a great deal to say about paying everything, but never paying, while the readjusters say they will pay all that can be paid." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, George C. Gorham, Washington, to William Mahone, Feb. 8, 1881.

221 The Riddleberger Debt Law, however, did not constitute the final settlement of the Virginia debt question. Because of the constant political agitation in the State the bondholders gradually ceased funding under the McCulloch Act and the Riddleberger Bill. Continued litigation in the State and Federal courts cried aloud for some arrangement which would prove more satisfactory to all parties concerned. Accordingly, upon the adoption of a joint resolution proposed by H. T. Wickham of the Virginia Senate, a commission was appointed by both the State and the bondholders, with F. P. Olcott acting as chairman of the bondholders' commission. Its work was begun in the summer of 1891, and the agreements were embodied in an Act of February 20, 1892, known as the "Olcott Settlement." It authorized the State to issue new bonds maturing in one hundred years from July 1, 1891, to the amount of $19,000,000.00, which were to be exchanged for the $28,000,000.00 of debt not yet funded. The bonds were to bear interest at the rate of two per cent for the first ten years and three per cent for the remaining ninety years. The total principal of the debt, excluding bonds held by the colleges, was placed at $25,081,-242.50, about four million dollars greater than the principal set forth in the Riddle-

support of public education.[222] In the field of charitable and humanitarian activities their progressive legislation far surpassed that of any previous period in Virginia history. These considerations, and others, would seem to add weight to the testimony of a prominent writer who, in 1930, declared that "under Mahone and the brilliant galaxy of men —Cameron, Riddlebarger [sic], Lewis, Paul, Wise and others whom he gathered around him—the State of Virginia had the best administration it had had in years, and it has never had as good since from the standpoint of efficiency and economy.[223]

berger Bill. The interest rate was somewhat reduced, however, and the compromise was accepted as satisfactory and final by both the creditors and the State. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 218, 219. Nevertheless, there still remained the problem of effecting a proper settlement of the debt between West Virginia and her creditors. This resulted in repeated litigations instituted by Virginia against that State. In the Supreme Court decision of 1915 West Virginia's share of the entire debt was placed at $12,393,929.50, and in its final decision of 1918 it declared that the State could be forced to discharge its just obligations. West Virginia finally decided to abide by the decision and subsequently made the full payment of $12,393,-929.50, thus bringing to an end this famous litigation. *Ibid.,* III, 335-338. Squires, *Land of Decision,* pp. 186-190. J. G. Randall, "The Virginia Debt Controversy." *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. XXX, No. 4, Dec., 1915, pp. 553-577. The *Charleston Gazette,* Sept. 2, 1923.

222 During this period the two most persistent opponents of free public schools were Dr. R. L. Dabney and Dr. Bennett Puryear. Their arguments against universal education were ably challenged, however, by Dr. Ruffner. Morton's study of this subject leads him to question the predominant contribution of the Readjusters to the public school system in Virginia, and to conclude "that the successful introduction of public schools was made possible through the earnest cooperation of all classes in the State, led by the most substantial element—the so-called aristocrats." This conclusion is valid, no doubt, but it represents only a part of the story. In the years following the financial panic of 1873 the public schools were shamefully neglected by the Funders who were primarily interested in the payment of the State debt, or at least the interest thereon. In such a crisis the Readjusters insisted on the major importance of the public schools and to them should go the credit in a large measure for the preservation and promotion of the public school system. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 246-250. *Personal Papers,* R. L. Morton, Williamsburg, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, April 1, 1933.

223 *Personal Papers.* Jennings C. Wise, Washington, to N. M. Blake, July 17, 1930.

CHAPTER VIII: THE SENATOR

> "I know of no consideration which could have induced me to have taken a seat in this Senate at the hands of that party, the Funder-Bourbon party of Virginia. I am under no obligation to it nor to its champions, here or elsewhere. My allegiance, under God, is to my country, and my first duty is to the people of Virginia. . . . I am here to assert that Virginia, the Mother of the Union, renews her faith in and devotion to the Government that her honored sons aided to construct; and in furtherance thereof I propose to give my best ability and to exert my every energy." — From the speech of William Mahone, delivered in the United States Senate on March 28, 1881.

SHORTLY after the sweeping Readjuster victory in the fall of 1879 John S. Wise wrote to Mahone, "I think you hardly appreciate how fraught with big consequences to you in every way was the fight you made."[1] In penning these lines to his friend Wise wrote more prophetically than he knew. As a matter of fact neither he nor Mahone was able at that time to appreciate fully the Readjuster victory nor to realize what its consequences would be in the history of Virginia and in the life of its leader. The following months, however, were to reveal the truth of his assertion that the Readjuster triumph was indeed fraught with big consequences to Mahone.

When the General Assembly convened on December 3, 1879, it began to consider the election of a United States Senator to succeed Robert E. Withers. Just how the members would vote on this question was a matter of considerable uncertainty due to the fact that the settlement of the debt question in Virginia had divided the Conservative party into two opposing factions—the Funders and the Readjusters. A small proportion of the Republicans had united with the Funders on the debt question, but an overwhelming majority was in sympathy with the Readjusters. In the election of 1879 men who were formerly recognized as Conservatives or Republicans had been elected to the Legislature as Funders or Readjusters and, as a consequence, it was difficult to ascertain in advance how they would vote in the election of a United States Senator.

The two leading candidates for the position were Robert E. Withers and General Mahone. Withers was a pronounced Conservative and in

1 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, Richmond, to William Mahone, Nov. 9, 1879.

sympathy with the program of the Funders. Mahone was a moderate Conservative, and at the same time, the recognized leader of the Readjusters. General Williams C. Wickham, the only other candidate for this position, was an influential Republican who had allied himself with the Funders. Among the candidates, then, were two Conservatives and a Republican—two Funders and a Readjuster. It was a confusing situation, to say the least, but it was generally conceded that the choice lay between Withers and Mahone.

Powerful forces were set at work to influence the members of the General Assembly in the selection of a Senator. Leading Republicans in Washington saw an opportunity to make a break in the "Solid South" and were strongly in favor of the election of Mahone. This was the sentiment of John Tyler, Jr., when he wrote President Hayes and Secretary Sherman that the real issue in the recent Virginia election "was between those with General Mahone advocating the policy of placing the State upon the line of progressive advancement in accordance with the spirit of the age and the Nation, and the Bourbons struggling in antagonism to both." The contest, he declared, had resulted in "the complete overthrow of the Bourbons, with the Republicans holding the balance of power in the Legislature." As a result, he continued, the situation was in every way "inviting for the recovery of the State, at length, to our great National interests, with all her moral prestige and historical impress."[2]

On the same date, November 8, 1879, Tyler addressed the following communication to Arthur A. Spitzer, Secretary of the State Republican Committee of Virginia, and to other prominent Republicans in the State:

> The results of the recent elections call for vigorous and energetic movements, it seems to me, in Virginia, to induce our people to avoid the danger that surely threatens those states and people in the South who may choose to continue in a course to invite and render certain the political doom that is threatened. I take it that the Republicans hold the balance of power between the Democratic factions in Virginia. This being so, a thorough and cordial understanding effected between General Mahone and ourselves can achieve the salvation of our people, by taking them from under the mastery of the Richmond Bourbon Ring, and thus out of the sinking ship of the extreme states of the South, on board of which they have been launched by the Bourbons, and which is inevitably fated to destruction with all who continue on board. You may rely upon it, the Northern Section of States and people mean no trifling with those of the Southern Section now, and in this view of the matter I have addressed to President Hayes and

2 *Ibid.* Manuscripts. A copy of this letter was sent to General Mahone by John Tyler, Junior, on Dec. 6, 1879.

Secretary Sherman, as well as to other prominent leaders of the Republican party, a communication as to the situation in Virginia, a copy of which I herewith enclose, for each of yourselves, and such others as are worthy, and earnestly invite your cooperation as to the objective point aimed at in behalf of Virginia and Virginians.[3]

The efforts of Tyler to establish a closer relationship between the Republicans and Readjusters of Virginia were supplemented by those of Simon Cameron, ex-Senator from Pennsylvania, who visited Mahone in the fall of 1879. Conferences were held with leading Republicans and Readjusters, "and the union of the two forces was made to embrace National objects."[4] The first step in such a program was the election of Mahone to the Senate, and in such a movement the Republican members of the General Assembly appeared to be in hearty accord.[5] Efforts were made by the Funders to destroy such an alliance and to form a combination which would be more favorable to their interests.[6] However, their attempt to destroy the natural alliance between the Readjusters and Republicans proved in vain.

When the election occurred on December 16, 1879, on the joint ballot Mahone received seventy-nine votes, Withers fifty-three, Wickham five, and Daniel one, or a total of seventy-nine to fifty-nine in favor of Mahone.[7] An analysis of the votes clearly indicates that Mahone was elected as a Readjuster—and not as a Conservative or a Republican. In the House of Delegates Mahone received fifty-six votes, Withers forty, and Wickham two.[8] The fifty-six votes which Mahone received were exactly equal in number to the fifty-six Readjuster members, and the vote was parallel except in two or three instances.[9] In the Senate Mahone received twenty-three votes, Withers thirteen, Wickham three, and Daniel one.[10] In the balloting Mahone received all but one of the

3 *Ibid.* Manuscripts. This letter was written by John Tyler, Junior, from Washington, on Nov. 8, 1879, to Arthur A. Spitzer, Secretary, State Republican Committee of Virginia, the Honorable Robert W. Hughes. William A. Cave, Esquire, and others prominent in the Republican party of Virginia. A copy of it was sent to Mahone on Dec. 6, 1879.

4 Thomas V. Cooper, *American Politics (non-partisan) from the beginning to date.* Philadelphia, 1882, I, 263.

5 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John Tyler, Junior, Washington, to William Mahone, Dec. 6, 1879.

6 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 43. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 135.

7 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1879-1880,* p. 58. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia, 1879-1880,* p. 60.

8 *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia, 1879-1880,* p. 60.

9 *Ibid. Warrock-Richardson Almanack for 1880.*

10 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1879-1880,* p. 58.

twenty-four Readjuster votes.[11] From this survey only one conclusion can be drawn, namely, that the men who had been elected to the General Assembly of Virginia as Readjusters were responsible for the election of their outstanding leader to represent them in the United States Senate.

As soon as Mahone's election seemed assured there were rumors that he would affiliate, more or less closely, with the Republicans in the Senate. When questioned on this point by an editor of the Philadelphia *Record,* Mahone promptly authorized the writer to say "that the statement that General Mahone will probably affiliate with the Republicans in the Senate is gratuitous & unwarranted—that the objects of the Readjusters are confined to questions of State policy entirely & are entirely foreign to & independent of federal politics."[12] After his election Mahone continued to remain silent regarding the position he would take in national politics. His desire to be left free and untrammeled in the matter was apparent from a statement of his which appeared as late as December, 1880:

> I shall adopt two lamps to light me along the road, and I trust they may keep me tolerably close to the right way. One is to endeavor to do that which will redound to the best interests of our common country, without stopping to inquire of the paternity of measures or how the status of a political party may be advanced or prejudiced. The other is to grapple with facts as they exist, not as we would wish them to be, to cease a vain race after abstractions, theories, impracticable or exploded, to catch at bubbles while the air is filled with substantial blessings. In remembering that I am an American—a citizen of the United States —I shall not forget that I am a Virginian.[13]

It is difficult to trace with any degree of assurance Mahone's activity in connection with the national election of 1880.[14] At first, apparently, he wanted the Readjusters to nominate independent Congressional candidates and an independent electoral ticket in order to maintain their organization and test their strength in a national election.[15] This

11 John R. Strother, Senator from the fifteenth district, was the only Readjuster member who failed to vote for Mahone. *Warrock-Richardson Almanack for 1880.*

12 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, C. H. Forbes, Philadelphia, to William Mahone, Dec. 8, 1879. This notation appears on the back of the letter, under date of Dec. 13, 1879.

13 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XVII, 3.

14 For varying accounts of Mahone's political movements in 1880 see Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 136-138; Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 199; Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* Chap. XVI; Cooper, *American Politics (non-partisan) from the beginning to date,* I, 263; Library of Congress, *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 45-47.

15 *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Richmond, to H. H. Riddleberger, May 14, 1880. In this letter Mahone declared that the Readjusters in Rockbridge County

view was concurred in by William H. Peyton who, on April 24, wrote Mahone as follows regarding a political convention recently held at Staunton:

> I believe it resulted just for the best—it will help us greatly in this Valley to keep together our *conservative* Readjusters, being rid of all the odium wh[ich] attaches to the Republican organization & the office holders. We are happily rid now, of both of the old party organizations & their office holders—& have the bulk of the voters of each, at our backs—& will sweep the state next fall for our ticket.[16]

A very different opinion, however, was held by H. H. Riddleberger of Woodstock. He opposed a Readjuster electoral ticket and asserted that in the Valley it was favored only by Peyton of Augusta, and John F. Lewis and his followers in Rockingham. He declared that while the Conservatives in the Valley were Readjusters two to one, they were opposed to a Readjuster electoral ticket ten to one. In a letter to Mahone he wrote:

> Had we not better make our fight for Congressmen, and there conclude? We are then masters of the whole situation. The next Gen[era]l Assembly is ours with ease and, of course, State ticket—C[our]t of App[eal]s—There will be no funders and no funder organization. Our State may then be taken from rear to front without opposition, much less danger. A year or two is short time in the life of a nation. For us to fail is fatal. If we recognize the facts of the situation we *cannot fail*.[17]

In response to this letter Mahone wrote Riddleberger on May 14:

> Who has a better right than the readjusters to make the Electoral ticket of the State and to cast the vote in the Electoral College? This party represents a majority of both of the old parties in the State by ten thousand. Will the people be ever willing to trust its leaders further if without cause they abandon the field and their colours now? It is not to be done.[18]

It was apparent to Mahone that the difference between the Readjusters and Funders in Virginia could not be amicably adjusted and he so expressed himself in a letter to Samuel J. Randall, Democratic Speaker of the House. It would be a blunder, he said, "to hope for any composition between the two opposing factions of the Democratic party . . . even for their participation in an election for President."

were "ready for action for any ticket agreed upon by the Readjusters—straight out or unpledged."

16 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, William H. Peyton, Staunton, to William Mahone, April 24, 1880.

17 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, H. H. Riddleberger, Woodstock, Virginia, to William Mahone, April 25(?), 1880.

18 *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Richmond, to H. H. Riddleberger, May 14, 1880.

Mahone, the Senator

"The breach," he continued, "is irreconcilable, one or the other of the two factions must control." "The Readjusters command the State by a majority of the white people," Mahone maintained, "and if you please they are the Democratic party." He warned Randall that the National Democratic leaders should proceed cautiously with regard to the Virginia situation since the recognition of the Funder electoral ticket would carry with it the condemnation of the Readjuster ticket of electors and for Congress. "If the National Democracy shall take sides against us and level here the weight of their influence and means," Mahone continued, then the Readjusters would find it necessary to take steps "to save themselves from destruction, at the hands of those whom they have not offended."[19]

With regard to the National Democratic Convention soon to be held at Cincinnati, Mahone mentioned the probable nomination of Samuel J. Tilden for President. He declared that the Funders were bitterly opposed to his selection, but asserted that this "would but enlarge his strength with the Readjuster party and make him in fact, always excepting Speaker Randall, the preferred man at Cincinnati."[20] However, when the convention assembled on June 22, Tilden withdrew his name from the list of candidates and the choice of the Democrats eventually fell upon Winfield Scott Hancock and William H. English.[21]

Accordingly, in the campaign of 1880 there were two Democratic electoral tickets, the Funder-Hancock and the Readjuster-Hancock.[22] In addition there was the Republican ticket, with electors pledged to James A. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur.[23] The fear that a divided

19 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, William Mahone, Richmond, to Samuel J. Randall, Washington, May 17, 1880. (Copy of letter retained by Mahone.)

20 *Ibid.*

21 "The Cincinnati Convention made two fatal blunders which lost them the control of the nation, the selection of General Hancock and the expulsion of General Mahone." Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 193. This statement is perhaps misleading in view of the fact that Mahone was not present at the Cincinnati Convention. The Virginia Funders held their State Convention on May 19 and elected delegates to the National Democratic Convention who were seated without contest at Cincinnati on June 22. The Virginia Readjusters did not hold their State Convention until July 7, when they nominated an electoral ticket pledged to Hancock and English. The "expulsion of General Mahone" really occurred in October when William H. Barnum, Chairman of the National Democratic Convention, officially recognized the Funder electoral ticket as the "Regular" Democratic ticket. Richmond *Dispatch,* Oct. 24, 1880.

22 Heading the Readjuster-Hancock ticket were W. E. Cameron and H. H. Riddleberger. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* p. 130. For reports of the Readjuster Convention see the Richmond *Whig,* July 8, 1880, and the Richmond *Dispatch,* July 8, 1880.

23 Mahone was charged with having a part in the formation of the Republican electoral ticket but he strongly denied it. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E.*

Democratic ticket might result in the success of the Republican party led to various efforts at coalition, among which was the "Shenandoah scheme of fusion."[24] The half-hearted response to the movement, however, fully convinced Mahone that the Funder and Readjuster factions could not be reconciled and that the sole result of such efforts might be the addition of a third electoral ticket in favor of Hancock. Only in such an event, Mahone thought, would the Republicans stand any chance of carrying the State for Garfield and Arthur.[25]

In a letter to Roger A. Pryor on August 19, Mahone asserted that the Readjusters were working diligently for the election of Hancock among the Republicans as well as among their own constituency. On the other hand, he maintained, the Funders were actually urging the Republicans to vote for Garfield rather than give their support to Hancock by means of the Readjuster ticket. The Readjusters were confident of victory, Mahone declared, and hoped to secure a large negro vote as well as "a significant and decided majority of the white vote in the State." He affirmed that the Readjuster policy toward the negro was "in the interest of the future of the Democratic party" both in Virginia and in the South, and believed that his support could be secured by "fair dealing and judicious methods."[26]

> There is no party organization here, no leadership—of the Republican party to give hope, courage and direction to the colored vote. The colored man has lost confidence in Repub[lican] leadership here—and he has no love any longer for the carpet bagger & the scallawag—and he hates the Grip-Sack Republican. He has felt the want of protection in V[irgini]a—he has longed for a leadership that would give him his rights before the law, and above all a free ballot and a fair count—hence the alacrity with which he now takes to the representative man who stands for fair treatment and the legal and constitutional rights of all men—hence his friendship for our party, whose platform speaks for itself.—[27]

As late as September 14 Judge Staples wrote to Mahone urging a compromise between the Democratic factions in the State. Referring to

Massey, p. 191. Cooper, *American Politics, (non-partisan) from the beginning to date*, I, 263. Earlier in the year, however, when Grant appeared to be the favorite candidate of Virginia Republicans, Mahone advocated fusion "on the basis of six Readjuster and five Republican electors pledged to Grant." Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 136, 137. Mahone's alleged relations with the Republican leaders early in 1880, are set forth and severely denounced in a pamphlet entitled "John Brown and Wm. Mahone. (1860-1880). An historical parallel, foreshadowing Civil trouble," by Dr. G. W. Bagby, Richmond, 1880.

24 *Mahone Collection*. Manuscripts, William Mahone to Roger A. Pryor, New York, Aug. 19, 1880. (Copy of letter retained by Mahone.)

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*

27 *Ibid.*

the criticism that Mahone's sponsorship of the Readjuster-Hancock ticket was inviting the success of the Republican party in the approaching election, he said, "I think you have now an opportunity of covering yourself with glory—and of refuting the aspersions of those who so often and so unjustly assail you."[28] Mahone realized, however, that a satisfactory compromise with the Funders was impossible and being unwilling to see the Readjusters abandon the field he determined to persevere in the course he had adopted.[29] The attitude of the National Democratic Committee, nevertheless, was clearly revealed in October when the Funder-Hancock electors were formally recognized as the regular Democratic ticket.[30] This decisive action was virtually the same as expelling Mahone and the Readjusters from the Democratic party. The election resulted in a victory for the regular Democratic ticket, the Readjuster ticket making a comparatively poor showing.[31] Virginia's electoral vote was given to Hancock, although Garfield polled a large vote.[32]

During the closing days of the campaign a most interesting letter regarding the national political outlook was written by George B. Cowlan of North Bend, Indiana, to S. B. Valentine.[33] Although a northern man, Cowlan had spent the last few years in the South and felt that he had acquired a sympathetic understanding of its attitudes and interests. His letter, forwarded to Mahone by Valentine, is here reproduced both because of its general historic interest and more especially because of its significant references to Mahone.

28 In this confidential letter Staples made this additional significant statement, "I wish to see you standing upon the highest ground and placing yourself in a position where beyond all contingency you will be able to exercise a just and strong influence as a leading Democratic Senator of the United States." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Waller R. Staples, Staunton, to William Mahone, Sept. 14, 1880.

29 For divergent accounts as to whether or not Mahone desired a fusion of the Funder and Readjuster electoral tickets see Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 137; and Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 199. Letters in the *Mahone Collection* indicate that Mahone was opposed to fusion and was convinced that no satisfactory compromise could be effected.

30 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XIII, 132, 133. Richmond *Whig,* Oct. 22, 1880; Richmond *Dispatch,* Oct. 22, 24, 1880.

31 The Funder-Hancock ticket received 96,912 votes; the Readjuster-Hancock, 31,674; and the Garfield-Republican, 84,020. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XIII, 116. The Richmond *Whig* declared that this vote was the result of a plot "invented by the Bourbons and concurred in by the Grip-Sackers, with the mutual understanding that the Re-Adjusters were to be defeated *in any event—either by carrying the State for Hancock by the Bourbon-Funder ticket, or for Garfield by the Grip-Sack Funder ticket.*" Richmond *Whig,* Nov. 17, 1880.

32 Stanwood, *History of Presidential Elections,* p. 373.

33 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, George B. Cowlan, North Bend, Indiana, to S. B. Valentine, Oct. 29, 1880. (Copy of letter retained by Mahone.)

. . . The "Solid South" is a shell, and a thin one, but it will not crack until after this election and then it will go to pieces, and I'll tell you why.

First, because a solid North, or nearly so, will jolt it, but still more, and secondly, because within itself the South has an element that must and will break up its present political solidity. At the close of the war the South accepted the results of the war in good faith and was ready to go to work and build up its waste places. But the infernal folly and stupidity of Andy Johnson gave them an idea that they might regain supremacy on the old exploded issues which produced the war, and with the aid of the worst elements of certain localities of the North they might ride into power. This restored to power in the South the old, fireating bourbon leaders, and for fifteen years every material interest of the South has been sacrificed to an insane wild-goose chase for political control of the country by the Hamptons, Lamars and Hills. Everything has been repressed except this sort of political insanity. But the business interests of the South, though bound in with this band of iron, has [sic] been strongly growing, swelling and gathering force in a way that, the moment this election is over, will shatter this whole heartless idiotic Solid South idea into a thousand fragments. The South has only produced one *statesman* since the war, and that the new Senator from Virginia, General Mahone. He seems to have grasped the great fact that the South, with her great natural wealth, can be and ought to be made as rich, as powerful and as prosperous as the most favored part of the country. . . . Mahone has done something in the way of forming a plan for future southern prosperity. He has laid the base for a future fair ballot and honest count in Virginia, upon which foundation all else can be built up, but without which no structure better than a shanty can ever be raised, and, if it could be would fall with the first storm. When the South goes to pieces Mahone will be the only leader with a shred or a patch left to cover his nakedness. Every other man comes with empty hands, helpless, but Mahone will come up with all his suppressed but growing and grown power of a policy looking to the development of the material resources of the South and through this sure and great means of increasing her political power along with her population, wealth and prosperity.

I tell you the South is full to bursting of natural wealth, and I predict for it, in the ten years to come, during which I feel certain it will be free from Bourbon rule, the greatest growth in population and wealth of any portion of the country. As for Mahone, I don't know how old a man he is, but probably about ten or a dozen years from now, maybe sooner, the South, marching to the music of the Union and keeping abreast with the rest of the country in its march forward will give us a President. If Mahone is alive then I predict he will be the man. If not then someone who shall follow his lead now will be. . . .

The perusal of such a letter could not fail to challenge Mahone with the possibilities which lay before him. He must devote his attention not only to Virginia politics, with its Funder-Readjuster controversy, but also to national politics, through his strategic position in the United States Senate. This point was emphasized in a letter which John Tyler, Jr., wrote to Mahone on November 11:

. . . and holding the balance of power in the Senate,—as I have been in the habit of saying for months past you would, basing my declaration upon my own calculations as to the composition of the Senate after the 4th March,—you are a potentate next to Garfield himself. . . . Strike for a broad *National* position for yourself and four years hence the *Nation* will not be able to escape your influence.[34]

For the time being, however, Mahone was primarily concerned with the political situation in Virginia. He desired above all else to take whatever steps might be necessary to insure the success of the Readjusters in the campaign of 1881, involving the election of a Governor, a Legislature, a Court of Appeals, and a United States Senator. In the coming contest Mahone knew that the Readjusters would be bitterly opposed by the Funders, who had received the loyal support of the National Democratic party in the recent election. Their only hope of success, then, would be to secure the coöperation and support of the Virginia Republicans who had voted for Garfield in the same presidential campaign. Accordingly, Mahone entered into a correspondence with George C. Gorham, editor of the *National Republican,* who undertook to represent the Readjuster cause to President-elect Garfield, General Grant, Senator Blaine, and other influential Republicans leaders with the idea of enlisting their support.[35] Gorham made it clear that Mahone wished to be assured that the Republicans in Virginia would not interfere with the success of the Readjuster party in 1881. In requesting the friendly coöperation of the National Republican party he insisted that there was "no disguise or secrecy in the business—no trades proposed, no dickering entertained."[36] "I have told them," Gorham wrote Mahone, "that I understood your aim to be the defeat of Bourbonism, and that you would join hands with them for that purpose,—though not as a participant in any caucus."[37] By the middle of February Gorham was convinced that the way had been prepared for "perfectly friendly relations" between Mahone and the Administration.[38]

34 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John Tyler, Junior, Richmond, to William Mahone, Nov. 11, 1880.

35 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, George C. Gorham, Washington, to William Mahone, Jan. 1, 1881. In this letter Gorham stated that he intended, at an early date, to publish Mahone's interview on the Virginia debt question in order that the views of the Readjusters might be better understood and appreciated. Referring to Mahone's treatment of the McCulloch Act, he said, "What a pirate you have made of McCulloch—representing nobody—a mere buzzard hovering over a dying horse. Be of good cheer. The nation is going to do you justice, and small men in V[irgini]a, claiming to be republicans, will, I think, find themselves powerless to block the wheels of progress."

36 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Feb. 8, 1881.

37 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Feb. 18, 1881.

38 *Ibid.*

When Garfield was inaugurated on March 4, 1881, there were thirty-seven Republicans and thirty-seven Democrats in the Senate. Two new Senators were to be seated, David Davis of Illinois, and William Mahone of Virginia. Davis had been elected as an Independent but had frankly declared that he would vote with the Democratic party.[39] Mahone's vote, therefore, would determine whether the Republicans or Democrats would control the organization of the Senate since the Republican Vice-President could cast the deciding vote in case of a tie. Mahone had refused to commit himself openly to either party, and his strategic position now made him the "most interesting personage in American politics," if not the "most important gentleman connected with the universe."[40] Holding, as he did, the "balance of power" in the Senate, the choice he made would be of paramount importance to himself, his State, and the country at large.

Mahone's political position was disclosed under circumstances of a strikingly dramatic nature. There had been a delay in the organization of the Senate because of uncertainty as to which party was in the majority. Dissatisfied with the prolonged delay Senator Benjamin H. Hill of Georgia delivered a powerful address on March 14 for the express purpose of "smoking out" Mahone—of making him declare his position.[41]

> I say what the whole world knows, that there are thirty-eight men on this floor elected as democrats, declaring themselves to be democrats, who supported Hancock, and who have supported the democratic ticket in every election that has occurred, and who were elected, moreover, by democratic Legislatures. . . . One other Senator who was elected, not as a democrat, but as an independent, has announced his purpose to vote with us on this question. That makes thirty-nine, unless some man of the thirty-eight who was elected by a democratic Legislature proves false to his trust.[42]

Senator Hill expressed the conviction that no Democratic Senator had

39 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 199, 200, Squires, *Through Centuries Three,* pp. 533, 534.

40 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XVIII, 3.

41 Although Hill spoke indirectly and by innuendoes it was apparent to all who were present that he had Mahone in mind. During the course of his remarks he declared, "The Senator from New York seemed to have information that somebody who was elected as a democrat was not, and I went to work to find out who it was. It seems I have uncovered him. For months the papers of the country have been discussing and debating how the Senator would vote. Nobody could know, nobody could tell, nobody could guess. . . . I have done what the newspapers could not do, both sides having been engaged in the effort for months; I have done what both parties could not do, what the whole country could not do—I have brought out the Senator from Virginia." *Congressional Record containing the proceedings and debates of the Special Sessions of the Senate of the forty-seventh Congress,* Washington, 1881, XII, 23.

42 *Ibid.*, XII, 21.

deserted his party and aligned himself with the Republicans. At least, he affirmed, "no democrat of the thirty-eight has given that notice to this side of the House," and, he continued, "I take it for granted that when a gentleman changes his opinions, as every Senator has a right to change his opinions, his first duty is to give notice of that change to those with whom he has been associated."[42]

> Sir, I concede the right of every man to change his opinions; I concede the right of every man to change his party affiliations; I concede the right of any man who was elected to the high place of a seat in this Senate as a democrat to change and become a republican; but I deny in the presence of this Senate, I deny in the hearing of this people, that any man has a right to accept a commission from one party and execute the trust confided to him in the interest of another party.[44]

Senator Hill reaffirmed his belief that no Senator who had been elected as a Democrat had proved "faithless to his trust." The Democrats were in the majority, he declared, and there was no need for a further delay in organizing the Senate.[45] Of course, he continued, it was a well known fact "that the patronage of the Federal Government has been used to buy votes and control elections to keep one party in power." Had the Republicans secured the vote of some man "who was elected as a democrat?"[46] "Who is it? Who can he be? Do you receive him with affection? Do you receive him with respect? Is such a man worthy of your association? Such a man is not worthy to be a democrat. Is he worthy to be a republican?"[47]

As Senator Hill continued his remarks it became increasingly obvious that he was seeking to discover Mahone's position on the floor.[48] Accordingly, he was interrupted by Mahone who declared that "the Senator has assumed not only to be the custodian here of the democratic party of this nation, but he has dared to assert his right to speak for a constituency that I have the privilege, the proud and honorable privilege on this floor, of representing without his assent, without the assent of such democracy as that he speaks for."[49] Mahone frankly asserted that he was under no obligation whatsoever to Senator Hill or to those for whom the Senator was speaking.

> I came here, sir, as a Virginian to represent my people, not to represent that

43 *Ibid.*
44 *Ibid.*
45 *Ibid.*, XII, 21,22.
46 *Ibid.*, XII, 22.
47 *Ibid.*, XII, 21.
48 *Ibid.*, XII, 22.
49 *Ibid.*

democracy for which you stand. I come with as proud a claim to represent that people as you to represent the people of Georgia, won on fields where I have vied with Georgians whom I commanded and others in the cause of my people and of their section in the late unhappy contest; but thank God for the peace and the good of the country that contest is over, and as one of those who engaged in it, and who has neither here nor elsewhere any apology to make for the part taken, I am here by my humble efforts to bring peace to this whole country, peace and good will between the sections, not here as a partisan, not here to represent that Bourbonism which has done so much injury to my section of the country.[50]

Mahone strongly objected to Hill's effort to define "what constitutes a democrat," at the same time asserting, "I hold, sir, that to-day I am a better democrat than he, infinitely better—he who stands nominally committed to a full vote, a free ballot, and an honest count. I should like to know how he stands for these things where tissue ballots are fashionable."[51]

Now, sir, I serve notice on you that I intend to be here the custodian of my own democracy. I do not intend to be run by your caucus. I am in every sense a free man here. I trust I am able to protect my own rights and to defend those of the people whom I represent, and certainly to take care of my own. I do not intend that any Senator on this floor shall undertake to criticize my conduct by innuendoes, a method not becoming this body or a straightforward legitimate line of pursuit in argument.[52]

In reply to the charge that he had failed to disclose his position Mahone maintained that he had given due notification of his attitude when he refused not only to attend Hill's "little love-feast" but also "to take part in a caucus which represents a party that has not only waged war upon me but upon those whom I represent on this floor."[53] Mahone declared that he had been elected to the Senate by a Legislature which had not required him to state that he "was a democrat or anything else."

I come here without being required to state to my people what I am. They were willing to trust me, sir, and I was elected by the people, and not by a legislature, for it was an issue in the canvass. There was no man elected by the party with which I am identified that did not go to the Legislature instructed by the sovereigns to vote for me for the position I occupy on this floor.[54]

The argument grew more acrimonious over the question as to whether

50 *Ibid.*
51 *Ibid.*
52 *Ibid.*
53 *Ibid.*
54 *Ibid.*, XII, 22, 23.

THE BALANCE OF POWER.

The Political Complexion of the next Senate.

The Political Situation in 1881

Mahone had accepted a commission from one party and had come to the Senate to represent another.[55]

Mr. Hill, of Georgia: "I should like to ask the gentleman a question: Was he not acting with the democratic party, and was he not elected as a democrat to this body? Answer that question."

Mr. Mahone: "Quickly, sir. I was elected as a readjuster. Do you know what they are?"

Mr. Hill, of Georgia: "I understand there are in Virginia what are called readjuster democrats and debt-paying democrats, or something of that kind, but as I understand they are all democrats. We have nothing to do with that issue. We are not to settle the debt of Virginia in the Senate Chamber; but I ask the Senator again, was he not elected to this body as a member of the national democratic party?"

Mr. Mahone: "I will answer you, sir. No! You have got the answer now."[56]

Senator Hill responded by declaring that it was a commonly accepted fact that Mahone had voted with the Democrats and a generally accepted belief that he had been elected to the Senate as a Democrat.[57] Accordingly, he appealed to Mahone to be true to the people, to the sentiment and to the party which he knew had commissioned him to a seat in the Senate.[58] He urged him not to take a step which would bring dishonor upon himself and his State.[59]

Men in this country have a right to be democrats; men in this country have a right to be republicans; men in this country have a right to decide on national issues and local issues; but no man has a right to be false to a trust, I repeat it, and whether the Senator from Virginia shall be guilty or not is not for me to judge and I will not judge. I say if he votes as you want him to vote, God save him or he is gone. If he comes here to illustrate his democracy by going over to that side of the House and voting with that side of the House, he will be beyond my rescue.[60]

Mahone's reply to Hill was delivered in the Senate on March 28, 1881. Speaking of his relationship to Virginia, he said:

With absolute confidence in my loyalty to her and my devotion to every interest of her people, I shall not relax my purpose to repel every impeachment of the constituency which sent me here with clearly defined duties which they and I comprehend. I was elected to the *Senate* of the United States to do *their* will, not to a *caucus* to do *its* petty bidding. Virginia earned her title of the Old

55 *Ibid.*, XII, 23.

56 *Ibid.*

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*, XII, 23, 24.

59 *Ibid.*, XII, 25.

60 *Ibid.* For a complete account of the stormy proceedings in the Senate on March 14, 1881, see *Ibid.*, XII, 14-28. Also see Cooper, *American Politics (non-partisan) from the beginning to date,* III, 207-216.

Dominion by the proud and independent action of her own people, by the loyalty of her sons to the instincts of independence, without help at the hands of those who would now interfere with her affairs.

However feebly I may assert that spirit against the gratuitous and hypocritical concern for her of strangers to her trials, her sacrifices, and her will, I feel that the spirit of my people inspires me when I scornfully repel for them and for myself ungracious attempts to instruct a Virginia Senator as to his duty to them and to himself. Senators should learn to deal with *their* constituencies, while I answer to *mine*.[61]

In this carefully prepared speech Mahone gave a review of his political activities beginning with the campaign of 1869 and extending as far as the Readjuster triumph of 1879. He discussed the debt controversy in Virginia, upheld the action of the Readjusters and contended for the constitutionality of the Riddleberger Debt Bill.[62] In his election to the Senate, he declared, he had been supported by "not only a majority of the so-called democratic readjusters but of the so-called republican readjusters."[63] He had been elected by the Readjusters of Virginia in spite of the hostile efforts of the Funders and it was to them that he owed allegiance.[64]

To obey the behests of the democratic caucus of this body, whose leadership on this floor, whose representative national authority—the one here and the other elsewhere—have championed the cause of the Bourbon-funder party in Virginia, would be an obsequious surrender of our State policy and self-condemnation of our independent action. . . .

I know of no consideration which could have induced me to have taken a seat in this Senate at the hands of that party, the Funder-Bourbon party of Virginia. I am under no obligation to it nor to its champions, here or elsewhere. My allegiance, under God, is to my country, and my first duty is to the people of Virginia. . . .

I am here to assert that Virginia, the mother of the Union, renews her faith in and devotion to the Government that her honored sons aided to construct; and in furtherance thereof I propose to give my best ability and to exert my every energy.[65]

Reports of the Hill-Mahone debate and of Mahone's independent pronouncements appeared in all the leading newspapers of the country.[66] Republican and liberal newspapers were loud in their praise of Mahone, and heartily commended his determination to establish in Virginia "a

61 *Congressional Record, Special Sessions of the Senate of the forty-seventh Congress,* XII, 85.
62 *Ibid.,* XII, 85-97.
63 *Ibid.,* XII, 96.
64 *Ibid.*
65 *Ibid.,* XII, 96, 97.
66 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XIX, 18-77.

free suffrage, a full vote, and an honest count."[67] In Virginia his action was approved by the *Whig* and by other Readjuster organs.[68] Numerous meetings were held throughout the State congratulating him on his courageous stand.[69] The Funder group, on the other hand, was bitterly critical of his attitude and condemned him as "a traitor to his State, his section and his party."[70] His allegiance to the Republican party also estranged many Virginia Conservatives and Confederate soldiers who were unable, or at least unwilling, to reconcile themselves to the paradox of a Confederate General voting with the Republicans.[71]

Mahone's decision in this crisis should be examined more critically. Senator Logan of Illinois was entirely correct when he affirmed that Mahone's position in the Senate required a full measure of courage and manhood.[72] Senator Hill of Georgia was no less truthful when he prophesied that Mahone's alliance with the Republicans would bring upon him the scorn and reproach of many Virginians.[73] Mahone was as conscious of the delicacy of his position as either Logan or Hill. Why, then, did he determine to cast his lot with the Republicans? Was it because he was willing to sell himself to the Republican party in order that he might exercise the Federal patronage? Emphatically no, although this was the charge which was so assiduously circulated by his political enemies.[74] Why, then? Was it in order that he might avenge himself against his political enemies? Essentially no, although the Conservatives had thwarted his nomination for the governorship in 1877, the Funders had sought to prevent his election to the United States Senate in 1879, and the National Democratic Committee had virtually expelled him from the party in 1880.[75] How, then, can one account for

67 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XVII, 39-46, XIX, 95.

68 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XIX, 1-18.

69 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XIX, 10, 14, 15, 96, 98, 118, 119.

70 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 47.

71 Conversations with Homer Atkinson, Petersburg, Virginia.

72 *Congressional Record, Special Sessions of the Senate of the forty-seventh Congress,* XII, 24.

73 *Ibid.,* XII, 25.

74 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. I, "Mahoneism Unveiled! The plot against the people exposed. Judge Lybrook, the Readjuster Senator from Patrick, tears the mask from Mahone," 1882. *Ibid.,* Vol. I, "Colonel Frank G. Ruffin's Letter. A terrible arraignment. Mahoneism Unveiled!" 1882. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* p. 241. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 150.

75 Squires asserts that in this decision Mahone made a great political blunder. "On that decision," he states, "the future leadership of General Mahone in Virginia rested. He knew that in national affairs all the Virginians were Democrats. If the shrewdest man in Virginia had been shrewder he would have voted Democratic

his decision? Because, under the circumstances, it was the only course which he could adopt with consistency and self-respect, and with the best interests of Virginia at heart. He had been elected to the Senate by Readjusters—by those who were diametrically opposed to the Funders and to Bourbon democracy. Mahone sided with the Republicans because he sincerely believed that "not to do so was to surrender Virginia, himself and all her people to Bourbonism."[76]

Mahone's decision gave the Republicans control of the Senate and placed that body in accord with the Federal administration. He was rewarded with the chairmanship of one committee and given a commanding position on three others.[77] H. H. Riddleberger was promptly nominated for sergeant-at-arms, and George C. Gorham for clerk of the Senate, by the Republicans.[78] These nominations, according to

Had he done so the crown would have been his until his death." And he concludes with the statement that Mahone voted Republican because he could not forget how he had been "read out" of the Democratic party in 1880 and he was determined to have his revenge. Squires, *Land of Decision*, p. 194. Also see Squires, *Through Centuries Three*, p. 534. A careful study of the circumstances, however, does not warrant the assertion that Mahone voted Republican in order that he might be avenged against the Democrats. Nor can one feel any assurance in stating that if Mahone had voted Democratic in the Senate his leadership in Virginia would have been assured and "the crown would have been his until his death." As a matter of fact, Mahone had clashed with the Bourbon element in the State many years before when he was engaged in consolidating the Southside railroads, and they were sworn enemies of his. This was clearly indicated in the gubernatorial contest of 1877 when Mahone's opponents conspired against him although he was one of the regular Conservative candidates. Following this, Mahone became the champion of the Readjusters because he sincerely believed that the Funder-Conservatives were failing to carry out the will of the people regarding the State debt. The gubernatorial campaign of 1877, the legislative struggle of 1879 and the National campaign of 1880 fully convinced Mahone of two things: (1) that he was the sworn enemy of the Bourbon element in Virginia, and (2) that he could not hope to accomplish anything either for himself or the people of Virginia by compromising with this faction.

76 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," p. 11. In this connection a friend wrote to Mahone from Virginia, "I suspect that Ben Hill was instigated by some V[irgini]a Bourbons in the attack he made upon you. You have done just what I expected you to do. Who could have expected you to go into a Democratic Caucus, or vote with a party that has twice ex-communicated you!" *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, J. Winston, Mitchell's Station, Culpeper County, Virginia, to William Mahone, March 24, 1881.

77 *Congressional Record, Special Sessions of the Senate of the forty-seventh Congress,* XII, 33, 34. Mahone was appointed chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, and given a place on the Committee on Naval Affairs, the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads, and the Committee on Education and Labor. On February 18, 1881, before the convening of the Special Session of Congress, Gorham had informed Mahone that the Republican leaders desired to "know your views as to the committees you would like to serve on, and will in all respects hope to meet you on terms of friendly regard. . . ." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, George C. Gorham, Washington, to William Mahone, Feb. 18, 1881.

78 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 138, 139.

Senator James Donald Cameron of Pennsylvania, were not mere party measures but were made with the hope that these men would stand with them "in favor of securing to each lawful voter the right to cast one free and unintimidated vote and to have it honestly counted."[79]

For several months Mahone had realized the importance of the approaching political contest in Virginia. As the acknowledged leader of the Readjuster movement in the State he was eager to see its program of reform enacted and put into execution.[80] The plan of the Readjusters, therefore, was to elect a Readjuster Governor and a Legislature that would make a just settlement of the debt, take steps to preserve and promote the public schools, abolish the poll tax of one dollar and enact numerous other reforms.[81] Senator Cameron and other Republican leaders recognized the significance of the "coming political contest in Virginia," and declared that if the Virginians would take a stand for a free ballot and honest count the solid South would be a thing of the past. "And this," Cameron said, "is the true meaning of the present struggle."[82]

Among the aspirants for the governorship in 1881 was Parson Massey, who, as an enthusiastic Readjuster and an efficient auditor of public accounts, had a large and loyal following throughout the State. Early in the canvass Massey became apprehensive that Mahone and his friends were working against him and encouraging the nomination of W. E. Cameron for governor. Newspaper correspondents, he declared in a letter to Mahone, were writing to the effect that "Massey seems to be the most popular candidate for the Readjuster nomination for Governor, though it is pretty well understood that Col. Cameron, of Petersburg, is Mahone's choice, and Massey may have to yield to him."[83] Massey sought to discount this rumor and added, "I know this is doing you great injustice as well as it is doing me great injury, and may result in serious damage to our cause."[84] In response to this letter Mahone asserted that he had tried to avoid stating any preference whatso-

79 *Congressional Record, Special Sessions of the Senate of the forty-seventh Congress,* XII, 137.

80 During 1880 and 1881 Readjuster legislation was somewhat obstructed because of the unfriendly attitude of Governor Holliday. The best example of this was his prompt veto of the Riddleberger Debt Bill. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 132, 142.

81 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXII, 25.

82 *Congressional Record, Special Sessions of the Senate of the forty-seventh Congress,* XII, 137.

83 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John E. Massey, Richmond, to William Mahone, April 13, 1881.

84 *Ibid.*

ever among the candidates for governor, all of whom were his personal and political friends. As chairman of the executive committee of the party he felt it his duty to stand aside in the matter and leave the people free to make their own choice.[85]

A strong letter came to Mahone from G. K. Gilmer, postmaster at Richmond, urging him to accept the nomination for governor. He declared that in the coming campaign the Readjusters could not afford to make experiments or run risks—that success was an absolute condition and defeat would mean annihilation. He cautioned Mahone against overestimating the strength of the Readjusters, saying that there was an "increasing conviction, on the part of republicans, that you are claiming and expecting too much of them; in fact, that they are to be ignored or taboo in the new arrangement; and that favors are only to be shown to democratic readjusters."[86] He continued:

> To be successful we must have all the elements of opposition to Bourbonism firmly united, and satisfied. That is the thought that was embodied in the idea of your candidacy for Governor. You are stronger, all my friends think, than any of your Lieutenants, by many thousands of votes. Some object to Massey for one reason, and some for another. Some object to Cameron because of the "irregularity" of his record, and the difficulty of defending it. Very many object to Wise because of the wanton and unprovoked onslaught he recently made upon the Republicans of the state. . . . General Groner has no following around here, or, so far as I know, outside of his district. . . . General William Mahone is the strongest man of his party. . . . "Mahone and Lewis" is the ticket to win. Other tickets *might* win. This one *would* win. Let us leave nothing to hazzard [sic] where certain success can be secured.[87]

Mahone had no intention, however, of becoming a candidate for the office. His choice, apparently, lay between Riddleberger and Cameron. When the convention assembled in June, Massey and Cameron were unquestionably the favorite candidates, but Cameron was finally victorious when Massey and his supporters moved that the nomination of Cameron be made unanimous. The ensuing contest with John W. Daniel was vigorously fought. John S. Wise and James D. Brady were especially appointed to solicit contributions from Republican leaders in the northern states for the promotion of "the liberal (now coalition) movement" in Virginia.[88]

85 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, William Mahone to John E. Massey. (Undated copy of letter retained by Mahone.)

86 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, G. K. Gilmer, Richmond, to William Mahone, May 14, 1881.

87 *Ibid.* The reference here is to John F. Lewis whose nomination along with Mahone would be "the best way to secure the full vote of all our people for our ticket." *Ibid.*

88 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, William Mahone, Petersburg, to T. L. James, Aug. 25, 1881. (Copy of letter retained by Mahone.)

With reasonable assistance from the outside, Mahone maintained, Bourbonism could be overthrown in Virginia, and similar efforts inspired and promoted in other southern states.[89] Wise conferred with several parties in New York[90] and felt encouraged over the prospect of securing financial aid for the Virginia canvass.[91] Benjamin F. Butler of Boston sent his personal check for one thousand dollars and expressed the hope of securing additional contributions from manufacturers who had the tariff interest at heart.[92] Senator Warner Miller, of New York, expressed the general Republican viewpoint when he wrote Mahone on August 15:

> I look upon the Coming Election in Virginia as of far greater importance to the whole country than the election in New York or any other state,—the result in Virginia is to decide whether the Liberal or Bourbon element is to control in the south, whether the issues of the war are to be considered as settled and we are to go forward and prepare for the education of the masses and to give our attention to the better development of the resources of the Country North and South, or whether the doctrines of hate are to continue to rule as for the past twenty years preventing the education and development of one section of the country.
>
> I know the North is ready for *peace* based on absolute justice to all and I believe the better portion of the Southern people are also ready for such a peace, and anxious to break away from the old order of things.—You have take[n] a bold stand and if you succeed in liberating your people from the bondages of Bourbonism you will deserve the praises of all true Americans.[93]

The coöperation of the National Republican party with the Readjusters was apparent when the Virginia "Straightout" Republicans failed to make any nominations at their August convention at Lynchburg.[94] Aided by this friendly coalition with the Republicans the Read-

89 *Ibid.*

90 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, New York City, to William Mahone, Aug. 25, 26, 1881.

91 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Idem to Idem, Aug. 28, 1881. Writing to Mahone from Baltimore, as he returned to the South, Wise said, "The more I think over the influences started in our favor at N[ew] Y[ork] the better satisfied I am that we will get a good little pile there before we are done, especially if G[arfield] dies, as he certainly will."

92 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Benj. F. Butler, Boston, Massachusetts, to William Mahone, July 18, 1881. While assuring Mahone of his desire to contribute to the success of the Virginia campaign, Butler made this interesting comment, "I was aware of one difficulty that I should have. The Republicans have not adopted you, and the Democrats have repudiated you, so that *qua* Republican and *qua* Democrat it would be impossible to interest anybody. But I supposed among the manufacturers here who have the tariff interest at heart, it would be not impossible to raise some money. But herein lies the difficulty: At this season of the year everybody is out of town."

93 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Hon. Warner Miller, Herkimer, New York, to William Mahone, Aug. 15, 1881.

94 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, [C. C.] Clarke, Lynchburg, to William Mahone, Aug. 11(?).

justers were able to win an overwhelming victory in the campaign. William E. Cameron was elected as governor to succeed F. W. M. Holliday, and the Readjusters maintained their comfortable majority in both branches of the Legislature. One of the first acts of the General Assembly was to elect H. H. Riddleberger to succeed Honorable John W. Johnston in the United States Senate.[95] The Readjusters promptly took advantage of their victory by electing a new bench of judges to the Supreme Court of Appeals. They also gained control of the public institutions of the State by replacing Funder officials with Readjusters. Firmly entrenched in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government the Readjusters were now ready to carry out their program of reform and progress.[96]

During the campaign of 1881 Mahone prepared a Readjuster pledge which was to be signed by each of the Readjuster candidates for the General Assembly. Copies of these were sent out from the Readjuster headquarters for distribution by various key men, including W. L. Fernald, the Republican collector of internal revenue at Danville.[97] Fernald forwarded the pledges on September 14, 1881, to Judge A. M. Lybrook, with the following message:

> Dear Judge,—I send you herewith two "pledges", to sign one and have your party nominee for the county to sign the other one, and return to me, and I will forward them to General Mahone, *who directs me to do this.*
>
> Of course it is nothing for an honest man to do and sign his hand to his faith. Please attend to this matter *promptly.*[98]

1881. (Telegram.) Senator Miller of New York wrote to Mahone, "The result at Lynchburg must of necessity bring to your support all of the Cabinet, and put a stop to the opposition of Federal office holders." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Hon. Warner Miller, Herkimer, New York, to William Mahone, Aug. 15, 1881.

95 The election was held on December 20, 1881. In the House of Delegates H. H. Riddleberger received fifty-nine votes and John W. Johnston thirty-six. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia for the session of 1881-1882,* Richmond, 1881, p. 70. In the Senate Riddleberger received twenty-two votes, Johnston thirteen, and Williams C. Wickham one. *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia; begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond, on Wednesday, December 7, 1881, being the one hundred and sixth year of the Commonwealth,* Richmond, 1881, p. 48. The joint vote, therefore, was Riddleberger eighty-one, Johnston forty-nine, and Wickham one. It was apparent that Riddleberger, like Mahone, was elected to the Senate by the Readjusters. And like Mahone, Riddleberger voted with the Republicans in the United States Senate. *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "A Statement on behalf of the Delegation of which General Mahone is Chairman, to the Republican National Convention at Chicago, June 3rd, 1884, and the record of Coalition between the Republican and Liberal Parties of Virginia," by James D. Brady, May, 1884, Petersburg, 1884, p. 16.

96 Library of Congress, *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 51.

97 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 152, 153.

98 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. I, "Mahoneism Un-

The "pledge" which was enclosed in the letter read as follows:

I hereby pledge myself to stand by the Readjuster party and platform, and to go into caucus with the Readjuster members of the Legislature, and vote for all measures, nominees, and candidates to be elected by the Legislature that meets in Richmond, as the caucus may agree upon.

Given under my hand and seal this — day of September, A.D., 1881.[99]

Shortly after the election Mahone sent out a general letter to several leaders of the party asking them to meet him in Richmond on November 28 to "consult on important political matters."[100] At this conference which was held a week before the convening of the General Assembly, steps were taken to organize and insure the proper functioning of the Readjuster caucus.[101] The careful planning of every detail was evident when the Readjuster caucus assembled just before the opening of the Legislature. About three-fourths of the members, it appears, had accepted and signed the pledge which Mahone sent out.[102]

Few, if any, of Mahone's political methods were more severely denounced than the use of the Readjuster pledge. When the matter became generally known it was strongly condemned by several of Mahone's erstwhile friends and eagerly seized upon by his political enemies. Massey had heartily applauded Mahone when he denounced Hill in the United States Senate, declaring, "I want the gentleman to know henceforth and forever here is a man, sir, that dares stand up and speak for himself without regard to caucus in all matters."[103] But now he was amazed, disillusioned, and offended to find that the man who had "thus proclaimed his independence of caucus rule was seeking to bind others to obey the most ignominious caucus rules ever framed."[104]

Colonel Frank G. Ruffin was no less outspoken in his objections to the pledge. He declared that it "required the surrender of a man's action," which should be governed by his conscience, "to an irresponsible body of party managers"; that it might easily lead to political corruption and the appointment of unworthy officials; that it was "against

veiled! The plot against the people exposed. Judge Lybrook, the Readjuster Senator from Patrick, tears the mask from Mahone," p. 2.

99 *Ibid.*

100 *Ibid.*

101 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone," p. 4. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 153.

102 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. I, "Mahoneism Unveiled! The plot against the people exposed. Judge Lybrook, the Readjuster Senator from Patrick, tears the mask from Mahone," p. 3.

103 *Congressional Record, Special Sessions of the Senate of the forty-seventh Congress,* XII, 23.

104 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* p. 192.

liberty and tyrannical"; and finally, that it was a "usurpation of authority on the part of General Mahone." He added, "No political convention in the United States had ever presumed to demand such a slavish test of any candidate, nor meditated giving such mischievous power to an executive committee, and certainly none such had been vested in Mahone."[105]

In issuing the Readjuster pledge of 1881 Mahone had gone only a step further than was suggested in his letter to Riddleberger in 1877. At that time he declared that it was the duty of the people to elect "representatives of their faith and will," and he further maintained that these members should be organized into a definite party before the convening of the Legislature in order to be fully prepared to accomplish their "high mission."[106] In 1881 Mahone was eager to perfect the organization of the Readjusters in order that they might achieve their objectives despite the opposition of the Funders. Regardless of his motive, however, one cannot help but be amazed by his alleged statement that the pledge was necessary because "many of the men who would be elected were so venal that if not bound by this sealed instrument and held up to the obligation, they would be bought by the opposition."[107]

Mahone likewise made use of the Richmond *Whig* to secure Readjuster unity. In its columns appeared the following striking article:

These gentlemen (the Readjusters) were elected for a specific purpose. There can be little doubt about that; nor about what the purpose was and is. We accordingly call upon each, every and all of these men to resign and go home, unless they will do what their constituents sent them here to do. What were they sent here for? Doesn't everybody know that the chief object was to get complete control of the Government and to put the Funders under foot? Of course. Now, then, if any man by his vote and course shall prevent or oppose this result, he is a traitor, a deserter, and, to put it very mildly indeed, an unscrupulous person.[108]

Four Readjuster members of the Senate, however, who had not signed

105 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. I, "Colonel Frank G. Ruffin's Letter. A terrible arraignment. Mahoneism Unveiled!" p. 3.

106 *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Petersburg, to H. H. Riddleberger, Aug. 31, 1877.

107 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone," pp. 3, 4.

108 *Ibid.* Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone," pp. 8, 9. In this scathing article, which was written by Mahone's political enemies, the accusation is made that when Mahone should have been busy in Washington in connection with his Senatorial duties he remained in Virginia to supervise the appointment of committees, organize the campaign, dictate the selection of his colleague in the Senate, and secure control of the Readjuster party in

the pledge revolted against Mahone's domineering leadership.[109] They were S. H. Newberry, of Bland, and Peyton G. Hale, of Grayson, formerly Conservatives; and A. M. Lybrook, of Patrick, and B. F. Williams, of Nottoway, formerly Republicans.[110] They soon became known as "the Big Four," and by their steadfast opposition were able to defeat certain objectionable measures which were proposed by the Readjusters.[111] Their courageous stand was loudly praised by many Virginians, but they were denounced and read out of the party by the Readjusters.[112]

Due to careful organization and the commanding influence of General Mahone the Readjusters were able to enact all of the important legislation which they had promised the people. This included the passage of the Riddleberger Debt Law, which was approved by Governor Cameron on February 14, 1882, and the supplementary acts known as "coupon killers." Reforms in taxation were made which decreased the assessed value of property and reduced the general property tax from fifty to forty cents. The Grandstaff Act was passed to supersede the Henkel School Bill, and the public schools were assisted by the payment of funds long since due them and by additional liberal appropriations. The humanitarian and charitable institutions of the State were assisted, and hundreds of insane were removed from the jails to

the State Legislature. *Ibid.*, p. 5. The further charge is made that Mahone was so determined to see to it that the Readjuster members of the Legislature remained true to their "pledge" that "he esconced [sic] himself in the room of the Public Printer, then in the Capitol, and by means of the ventilating tube of the House of Delegates, which ran through the room, personally or by his selected eaves-droppers, overheard all that his 'venal' supporters might say or do." *Ibid.*, p. 8.

109 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, p. 153. At the time of Mahone's death (1895) this comment appeared in the Richmond *Dispatch* regarding these men: "None of the four had any personal grievance against Mahone. Their opposition was to his political schemes and to the drastic methods that the Readjuster caucus had adopted to oust every Democrat in Virginia from office, and to subsidize the partisan press by means of what was known as the 'Commissioner of Sales' bill. But it is safe to say that the influence of Mr. Massey went a long way in influencing 'the big four.'" Richmond *Dispatch*, Oct. 9, 1895. In 1930 a portrait of Massey and the "Big Four" was unveiled in the Virginia Capitol. It hangs in the room once occupied by the Confederate Senate.

110 Newberry was from the fifth Senatorial district, comprising Pulaski, Wythe, Bland, and Giles; Hale came from the sixth district, composed of Carroll, Grayson, and Floyd; Lybrook was from the twenty-third district, consisting of Patrick and Henry; and Williams represented the twenty-eighth district, which included Lunenburg, Nottoway, and Brunswick. *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia for 1881-1882*, pp. 3, 4.

111 Morton, *History of Virginia*, III, 205. Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets*, Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone," p. 10.

112 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887*. Pamphlets, "Address of the Readjuster Members of the Legislature to the People!" Richmond, April, 1882, pp. 9, 10.

asylums. The poll tax was abolished as a prerequisite for voting, and numerous other reforms were effected, such as the abolition of the whipping-post and the placing of restrictions upon dueling.[113]

There were several other legislative measures, however, which the Readjusters were unable to enact because of the opposition of "the Big Four."[114] Friends of Mahone and of the Readjusters defined these measures as "things which the people desired."[115] But their opponents denounced them as autocratic and tyrannical with no other object than to strengthen the power of Mahone and of the Readjuster party which was rapidly coming under the domination of the national Republican party.[116] Ruffin declared that these proposed measures were unparalleled by anything that he had seen in nearly fifty years of political activity:

> In that time I have seen much; but never before saw I anything like the state of affairs which General Mahone has sought to bring, and in some particulars has brought, upon the people of Virginia. I name now as the most shameful thing that I ever witnessed, the mode well known to the public, in which he was permitted to neglect his duty in Washington and to invade the Capitol at Richmond, to dictate, corrupt, and poison the proceedings of our Legislature. I pity the Virginian who does not blush when he thinks of it.[117]

By 1882 Mahone was the acknowledged boss of the Readjuster machine.[118] His position as chairman of the Readjuster State executive committee and chairman ex-officio of the State central committee made him the commanding figure in the party. Added to this was his position as a United States Senator which, on account of his cordial relations with the Republican administration, gave him command of a vast

113 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 52-54. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 142-147.

114 Among these were the "Commissioner of Sales" bill, the Railroad bill, and the School bill, all of which, according to Mahone's enemies, were designed to concentrate patronage in the hands of a few Readjuster leaders. There were other measures which proposed to gerrymander the State and to rearrange the Judicial circuits in such a manner as to secure legislative and judicial seats for "Mahone men." And it was rumored that there were still other proposals in process of formulation looking forward to the "concentration of power and its further extension." Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 158. Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone." pp. 9, 10.

115 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 54.

116 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. I, "Colonel Frank G. Ruffin's Letter. A terrible arraignment. Mahoneism Unveiled!" *Ibid.,* Vol. I, "Mahoneism Unveiled! The plot against the people exposed. Judge Lybrook, the Readjuster Senator from Patrick, tears the mask from Mahone."

117 *Ibid.,* Vol. I. "Colonel Frank G. Ruffin's Letter. A terrible arraignment. Mahoneism Unveiled!" p. 16.

118 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* p. 194. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 151.

Federal patronage. On this point William Lawrence Royall, one of Mahone's severest critics, wrote:

> When General Garfield died, and General Arthur became President, the complexion of matters in Virginia in this regard instantly and seriously changed. It was communicated to each Federal office holder in the State, that he must cooperate with the Readjusters, or his official head would pay the penalty, and a few obstinate ones were actually removed, and their places filled with Readjusters. It did not take many lessons of this sort to teach the new political faith. The scenes changed as if by magic. All semblance of organized Republican opposition to the Readjusters disappeared, and the Readjuster party of Virginia swallowed the Republican party of Virginia, body and bones, at one gulp.[119]

Mahone made use of his control over the State and national patronage by placing Readjusters and "Mahone men" in positions of importance and influence. Some of these changes were fortunate while others were severely criticized. In 1880 Parson Massey replaced William F. Taylor as auditor of public accounts, and performed an energetic and commendable service.[120] But he was succeeded in 1882 by S. Brown Allen, a "Mahone man" whose work proved none too satisfactory. Numerous other changes were made, none of which was more strongly condemned than the appointment of Richard R. Farr as superintendent of public instruction to succeed William H. Ruffner.[121] Friends of the party were placed in charge of the educational and charitable institutions of the State, and new appointments were made in the judicial system as incumbent judges were retired.[122] The Federal patronage, likewise, furnished an opportunity for the employment of a large number of individuals in the treasury service and the postoffice department, in connection with the Federal courts, and at the Portsmouth Navy Yard.[123] These positions, as a rule, were filled with men who were avowed friends of the Readjuster movement. The employees were freely called upon, in turn, to contribute a certain percentage of their salaries to the Readjuster committee for campaign purposes.[124]

119 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, William Lawrence Royall, "The President's Relations with Senator Mahone and Repudiation. An attempt to subvert the Supreme Court of the United States," New York, 1882, p. 4.

120 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* Chapter XV.

121 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 147, 148. Morton declares that Farr may have lacked educational training, but that he was an efficient and devoted worker—and adds that even Dr. Ruffner spoke favorably of him. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 265, 266.

122 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 148-150.

123 According to Pearson the treasury service offered employment to about two hundred men, the postoffice department about 1,700 men, and the federal courts about seventy men. The Portsmouth Navy Yard furnished employment to a great many men when it was difficult to find work elsewhere. *Ibid.,* p. 154.

124 *Ibid.,* pp. 154, 156.

No one displayed stronger opposition to these activities and methods of Mahone than did Parson Massey. He expressed his views to each of the four Readjuster Senators who had not signed the Readjuster pledge and was able to win their determined and continued opposition to the more radical Readjuster proposals.[125] Massey, it should be understood, had personal as well as political grievances against Mahone. He declared that he was robbed of the gubernatorial nomination in 1881 because he refused to become subservient to Mahone.[126] Again, he resented the fact that Mahone had dictated the election of Riddleberger, rather than himself, to the United States Senate to succeed John W. Johnston.[127] And finally, early in 1882, he was replaced by S. Brown Allen as auditor of public accounts because he could not reconcile himself to Mahone's caucus measures.[128]

Massey's outspoken hostility to Mahone recommended him as the most logical person to lead the attack against "Mahoneism" in the Congressional election of 1882. He was approached in this matter early in the year by George D. Wise and John S. Barbour.[129] And in July, in a conference with Wise, Barbour, J. Randolph Tucker, John W. Daniel and other Democratic leaders in Washington, he was induced to announce his candidacy for Congressman-at-large from Virginia.[130]

In his appeal to the people Massey declared that the leaders of both the Readjuster party and Funder party had formerly been Democrats and that each faction had solicited the coöperation of the Republicans in the settlement of the State debt and in the solution of other important problems. Now that the Readjusters had enacted all of the legislation which they had promised the people he felt there was no reason why men of the same political party should not be united again.[131] He maintained that he had been a firm advocate of readjustment and had supported it "at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, from an honest conviction of right and duty." "I was,

125 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* pp. 211, 212.

126 *Ibid.,* Chapter XVII.

127 George F. Bragg, Junior, a negro supporter of Mahone, declares that one of the reasons why Mahone "lost out" in Virginia was because of his failure to support Massey for the United States Senatorship. "Mr. Massey," he writes, "had made a splendid State Auditor. Aside from Mahone, no man in the State was stronger than Massey with the rank and file. The election of H. H. Riddleberger to the Senate resulted in a breach beyond the power of healing." *Personal Papers.* George F. Bragg, Junior, Baltimore, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 25, 1930.

128 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* pp. 204-207.

129 *Ibid.,* pp. 213, 214.

130 *Ibid.,* p. 237.

131 *Ibid.,* p. 239.

however," he continued, "a Virginian and a Democrat before the question of Readjustment ever arose, and my advocacy of Readjustment never lessened my devotion to my State or changed my political principles."[132]

Massey bitterly denounced Mahone who, he said, while claiming to be a Democrat and a friend of Democracy, had formed an alliance with the Republican party and was intent on "handing the whole State over to Arthur in exchange for the Federal patronage of Virginia."[133] Defining Mahone's purposes more fully, he declared:

> Let no one infer from what I have said that I charge General Mahone with having special admiration or kind feeling for a Republican. He cares not a fig for either a Republican or a Democrat further than he can use him for his own benefit. If a man be a *Mahoneite,* he needs no other recommendation or qualification. This fits him for office, whether he be a Democrat or a Republican. If he be an anti-Mahonite, it matters not how true, how honest, and how capable he may be, no other charge is necessary to insure his removal from office, though he may be filling it well, whether he be a Democrat or a Republican. Self is the controlling consideration![134]

John S. Wise was nominated by acclamation for Congressman-at-large at a joint meeting of the Readjuster and Republican State committees at Richmond on June 19.[135] Mahone issued a circular letter to Readjuster workers throughout the State urging them to organize for the canvass. "Thorough and efficient organization," he wrote, "is the instrument of success—in war, in business, and in politics—and the mass of all parties expect this at the hands of their own chosen leaders."[136] He also asked that the names of key men should be forwarded to C. C. Clarke at the *Whig* office with an indication as to whether they were Conservative Readjusters, Republican Readjusters, or Colored Republican Readjusters.[137]

Mahone's campaign plans included the employment of a number of speakers throughout the State. Accordingly, on July 17 he addressed the following letter from Washington to H. H. Riddleberger, B. W. Lacy, S. Brown Allen, William Lamb, F. S. Blair, L. L. Lewis, D. A. Hinton and others:

> We want to begin the canvass generally all over the State in August, and we have need for all our speakers. Please indicate to me at your earliest convenience

132 *Ibid.*, p. 240.
133 *Ibid.*, p. 241.
134 *Ibid.*, p. 243.
135 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXX, 5.
136 *Ibid.*, Scrap Books, XXX, 8.
137 *Ibid.*, Scrap Books, XXX, 9.

what time you can give to the cause on the stump, and if you have any preference as to section or locality, specify your will in that respect. We can and should route [sic] the enemy before he gets up.[138]

During the campaign "Mahoneism" was violently arraigned in the pamphlets prepared by Frank G. Ruffin and A. M. Lybrook.[139] These pamphlets urged Virginians to break the collar of the boss who was "seeking to march Virginia into the camp of stalwart Republicanism for his own benefit."[140] On the other hand, Mahone's objectives and methods were defended by those who maintained that Bourbonism, whether Democratic or Republican, must be entirely and permanently overthrown if the regeneration of Virginia was to be achieved.[141] Massey was denounced as a traitor to his party[142] and his defeat in November was prophesied in the familiar, though paraphrased, verse:

Down midst de Funders,
  Hear dat mournful sound!
All de Funders am a-weeping
  Poor Massey's in de cold, cold ground.[143]

The Congressional campaign of 1882 resulted in the election of six Readjuster candidates, out of a total of ten. The most important of these was Wise's victory over Massey for Congressman-at-large.[144] Two of the six elections were contested, however, and in one instance the House of Representatives decided in favor of the Funder candidate.[145] The campaign was recognized on all sides as a Readjuster triumph.

138 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXX, 10. *Riddleberger Papers,* William Mahone, Washington, to H. H. Riddleberger, July 17, 1882.

139 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. I, "Colonel Frank G. Ruffin's Letter. A terrible arraignment. Mahoneism Unveiled!" *Ibid.,* Vol. I, "Mahoneism Unveiled! The plot against the people exposed. Judge Lybrook, the Readjuster Senator from Patrick, tears the mask from Mahone."

140 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* p. 243.

141 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 158, 159.

142 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXVII.

143 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXIX, 54.

144 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 54, 55. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 160, 161.

145 According to the election returns Paul defeated O'Ferrall in the Shenandoah District by a vote of 12,146 to 11,941. O'Ferrall immediately claimed that Paul had been fraudulently elected by the Readjuster election officials. At this time there was an election requirement to the effect that a capitation tax must be paid by the voter before the day of the election. O'Ferrall maintained that hundreds of voters, mostly negroes, were given receipts for taxes on the day of election by unscrupulous tax-collectors who put on them an earlier date. These receipts were exhibited at the polls, votes were cast for the Readjuster candidate, and then the receipts were returned to the tax-collectors for money. The case was contested before the House of Representatives and just before the close of the second session the seat was awarded to O'Ferrall. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* pp. 214-216.

U. S. SENATE CHAMBER

WASHINGTON July 17th 1882

My dear Riddle.

We want to begin the Canvas generally all over the state in August, and we have need for all our speakers. Please indicate to me at your earliest convenience what time you can give to the cause on the stump, and if you have any preference as to section or locality, specify your wild in that respect. We can and should route the enemy before he gets up.

Truly yr friend
Wm Mahone
Chm

Hon H H Riddleburger
Woodstock
Va

A Mahone Letter

With Mahone already in the Senate and Riddleberger about to join him there, there was little question but that the "Solid South" had been broken in Virginia.[146]

In 1883 the Funders, chastened by successive defeats, determined to adopt new tactics and methods in conducting the legislative campaign of that year. They formulated a policy, therefore, which involved three important features: (1) the renunciation of the Funder claim to a monopoly of conservatism; (2) the revival of an issue by which they hoped to strengthen and unify their constituency; and (3) the selection of a more popular and efficient leadership.[147] A convention was held at Lynchburg on July 25, 1883, which was attended by delegates who had been elected as Conservative Democrats.[148] At this meeting steps were taken to inaugurate the new policy of the party. Disregarding the terms Funder and Readjuster, the delegates recognized themselves simply as Conservative Democrats, and the party now formally adopted the name Democrat for the first time. The convention acquiesced in the Riddleberger debt settlement,[149] and declared the matter to be a dead issue. In place of this it raised a cry against "Mahoneism" and emphasized the importance of the "color" issue. The rejuvenated party unquestionably demanded a more aggressive leadership. Accordingly, John S. Barbour, who had played an important part in formulating the new party policy, was unanimously elected as chairman of the State committee to succeed A. M. Keiley.[150]

The campaign of 1883 was aggressive and bitterly fought.[151] In the opposite camps were John S. Barbour, a member of Congress, and General Mahone, a United States Senator. Barbour was a railroad man

Massey also endeavored to contest the election of Wise, but the case was never called up before the House of Representatives. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* pp. 245, 246.

146 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 161.

147 *Ibid.* pp. 161, 162.

148 *Ibid.,* p. 162. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 221. Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* pp. 248, 249.

149 In March, 1883, the Supreme Court had declared "Coupon Killer, Number One" to be constitutional, and thus had sustained the Riddleberger debt settlement. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 162.

150 *Ibid.,* pp. 162, 163. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 207-209. Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 55, 56. Regarding the convention, Squires comments, "The Democrats in Lynchburg (July 25, 1883) condemned Mahone with words which left nothing to be desired in vituperation, but they flattered him in flattery's sincerest form—imitation. They took over his policies, wholesale!" Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 196.

151 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXI, 2-20. Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 56, 57. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 222.

and a Funder, and in each of these capacities he and Mahone had been definitely arrayed against each other in the past. This personal rivalry was carried over in the campaign, particularly since "Mahoneism" was the chief issue.

Evidence of the fact that the Democrats hoped to regain the support of all their former constituency may be found in the appeal of Frank G. Ruffin to the 31,527 Readjuster Democrats of Virginia who voted the Readjuster-Hancock ticket in 1880. He wrote:

> No one can be more sensible than I am that the Democratic party, both of the State and the Union, have [sic] grievous faults; no one knows better that in the bitter quarrel we have had over the debt, the Democratic party of the State did us and themselves great injustice; but no one who coolly examines the question can say that either in Federal or State affairs have they ever been guilty of such abuses of government, such violations of the rights of citizens, such corruptions, and such flagitious attempts in all those directions as have marked General Mahone's alliance with Mr. Arthur, and have characterized his domination in Virginia. There may be some hope that our re-union with the Democrats may produce reform. But there can be no doubt that our countenance of General Mahone will increase and intensify abuses. Choose ye between the two.[152]

As the campaign progressed increasing emphasis was placed on the "color" issue by both parties.[153] Democratic speakers frequently resorted to "dividing the crowd" on public occasions, and Republican leaders often inflamed the negroes by radical utterances.[154] Frequent references were made to the intolerable race situation which existed at Danville.[155] In this Southside town more than half of the eight thousand inhabitants were negroes. The white population, however, cared for approximately ninety-five per cent of the $40,000.00 tax burden. Under the Readjuster Legislature the city government had been reorganized in such a way that the negroes held a majority of the offices and enjoyed numerous advantages of trade and commerce. Many of the whites frowned upon such "Africanization" and pictured it as the inevitable result of "Mahoneism."[156]

The state of affairs in Danville and the widely circulated rumors of

152 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. I, Frank G. Ruffin, "An Appeal to the 31,527 Re-Adjuster Democrats of Virginia. Who is here so base that would be a bondsman?" Richmond, 1883, p. 2.

153 A special campaign paper, called the *Democratic Campaign,* which was published at Lynchburg, gave particular attention to the race question. See *Democratic Campaign,* Oct. 29, 1883.

154 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 163, 164.

155 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 57, 58.

156 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 164. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 210, 211.

an impending uprising paved the way for the Danville Riot on November 3, 1883.[157] On this date a street brawl led to a riot in which several persons were killed or wounded. The governor promptly called out the State militia and order was quickly restored.[158] The occurrence of the riot on Saturday, November 3, just three days before the election on the following Tuesday, proved a great boon to the Democratic cause. Their leaders lost no time in spreading the news throughout the State, at the same time calling upon the whites to unite against the danger of further negro outrages and domination. Mahone and his associates exerted every possible effort to counteract this propaganda but could make little headway because of a lack of time. The voters turned out in large numbers and the Democrats were successful in winning nearly two-thirds of both houses. The decisive victory, without doubt, was due in large measure to the timely occurrence of the Danville Riot.[159]

As soon as the General Assembly had convened, Senator Newberry, who was a member of "the Big Four," introduced a resolution in the Senate asking General Mahone to resign as United States Senator. The resolution declared that Mahone had been absent from Washington for about five months while the Senate was in session in order to direct the Legislature of Virginia for selfish purposes; that he had betrayed his party and had endeavored to deliver Virginia into the hands of the Republicans in return for the Federal patronage of the State; that he had actively striven to arouse the prejudice of citizens of other states against the respectable citizens of Virginia; and that he had sought "to array class against class, and race against race."[160] The resolution was agreed upon by both houses of the General Assembly and a copy was

157 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 58.

158 Pearson. *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 164. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 210-212.

159 Because of the widely divergent accounts of the riot it is extremely difficult, even at the present time, to determine its origin or trace its course. The Democrats denied any part whatsoever in its instigation and maintained that it was the natural outcome of the intolerable situation at Danville. The Readjusters, however, contended that the uprising had been deliberately provoked by the Democrats for campaign purposes, and Mahone was able to secure considerable evidence to support this contention. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXI, 24-30. Library of Congress, *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 58-61. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 164. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 212. For contemporary accounts of the Danville Riot, its background and results, see the Richmond *Dispatch,* Nov. 2, 4, 7; the Richmond *State,* Nov. 5, 8; and the Richmond *Whig,* Nov. 2, 6, 1883.

160 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia: begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond, on Wednesday, December 5, 1883, being the one hundred and eighth year of the Commonwealth,* Richmond, 1883, pp. 20, 21. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia for the session of 1883-1884,* Richmond, 1883, pp. 270, 271.

sent to the clerk of the United States Senate.[161] Realizing, however, that political venom had inspired the resolution, Mahone gave the matter very little consideration.

The General Assembly promptly ratified the Readjuster legislation which had been passed in accordance with the "will of the people." The Riddleberger debt settlement was accepted, and with it the economic and social measures which provided for "the more liberal suffrage, the larger appropriations for schools and charities, the lower and fairer taxes, and the abolition of the whipping-post."[162] The Legislature, thereupon, proceeded to take steps to overthrow "Mahoneism" and to establish Democratic supremacy in its place. Vigorous and questionable methods were employed to increase the Democratic majority in each house to two-thirds. It was agreed that the patronage should be distributed by means of the caucus. State and public offices were declared vacant and appointments were made which were favorable to the Democrats. Town charters were changed so as to aid Democratic control. Congressional districts were rearranged with the same political purpose in mind. Election laws were passed which practically turned over all of the election machinery to the Democrats. Except for brief intervals the General Assembly remained in session for almost a year during which a number of partisan investigations were carried on and a great deal of high-handed legislation approved.[163]

In 1884 it was necessary to elect a successor to President Arthur. The reunion of the Funder and Readjuster Conservatives as Democrats and the success of their campaign in 1883 urged the necessity of a more united organization on the part of the Coalitionists. Accordingly, by the joint action of the regular Republican and Readjuster State central committees a State convention was called to meet in Richmond on April 23, 1884.[164] Nearly a thousand delegates and alternates were present from all sections of the State.[165] The convention was called to order by General Mahone who was greeted with tremendous applause, and cheered as the "champion of freedom," the "friend of the black man,"

161 *Journal of the Senate of Virginia, 1883-1884,* pp. 20, 21, 212, 222, 228-230, 246, 250, 546, 675, 676; *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, 1883-1884,* pp. 247, 265, 266, 270, 271.

162 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 165, 166.

163 *Ibid.,* pp. 166-168. Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 61-66. *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Bourbon Democracy Exposed. A fearful indictment against the late Democratic Legislature," (1883-1884).

164 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXII, 2.

165 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXII, 9. *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "A Statement on behalf of the Delegation of which General Mahone is Chairman, to the Republican National Convention at Chicago, June 3rd, 1884," pp. 24, 25.

and the "workingman's friend."[166] Colonel William Lamb of Norfolk was named temporary chairman, and later elected as permanent president of the body.[167]

Every detail of the convention had been carefully attended to in advance. On the speaker's platform was a large American flag, and around the arch was a banner inscribed, "With malice to none, with charity to all."[168]

There was marked enthusiasm and frequent applause as Mahone read the platform. Affirming that the Republican party of the United States had loyally supported the cause of liberalism in Virginia, the platform declared:

> Therefore, we, the representatives of the people comprising the Coalition party of Virginia, in convention assembled, do declare:
>
> That, from and after this day, our party shall be known as the Republican party of Virginia; that in National affairs we shall follow the banner of the National Republican party, and shall support with zeal and fidelity its nominees for President and Vice-President.[169]

The platform denounced Bourbonism and called for liberalism and progress in State and National affairs. A protective tariff was demanded to protect the manufacturing, agricultural and labor interests in the State. President Arthur's administration was endorsed and he was declared to be the choice of the Virginians for the nomination at Chicago.[170] The convention proceeded to elect General Mahone chairman of the State executive committee, and a delegation headed by Mahone, was elected to attend the National Convention.[171]

When the delegation arrived at Chicago its right to represent the Republicans of Virginia was contested by those who came representing

166 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXII, 9.

167 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXII, 9, 10.

168 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 168. In connection with this quotation it is interesting to observe that after Mahone's successful campaign in Virginia in 1881, the following statement was made regarding the significance of that election: "Lincoln freed four millions of human beings from bodily servitude, but of necessity their minds and souls were left enslaved to the old oligarchy which has always ruled and now rules the South. Mahone has proclaimed the emancipation of millions of white men in the South, whose mental slavery has been little less galling than that of the blacks. Mahone has appeared to finish the work of Abraham Lincoln." *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Lesson of the Virginia Election. Speech of R. Hutcheson, Esq., of Louisiana, at Saint George's Hall, Washington, D. C., November 28, 1881," p. 1.

169 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "A Statement on behalf of the Delegation of which General Mahone is Chairman, to the Republican National Convention at Chicago, June 3rd, 1884," p. 25.

170 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXII, 10, 11.

171 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXII. 11.

the "Straight-out" Republicans.[172] The Mahone delegates were recognized, however, by both the National Republican Committee and the convention, and General Mahone received a tremendous ovation when he entered to take his seat.[173] The delegates were instructed to vote as a unit for Arthur, their slogan being, "We are for Arthur because Arthur is for us." They acquiesced, however, in the nomination of Blaine, who sent them word that "Arthur could not have been a better friend to General Mahone than he would be."[174]

Although the Virginia Republicans were disappointed in their efforts to secure the nomination of Arthur they carried on a determined campaign in behalf of Blaine.[175] Little material aid, however, was given them by the National Committee.[176] According to the election returns, Cleveland was victorious over Blaine by a vote of 145,497 to 139,356. The Democrats also elected eight of the ten Congressional candidates.[177] The Republicans claimed that they had been defeated by fraud, corruption and intimidation. Mahone prepared to contest the electoral vote, but abandoned it when it became apparent that Cleveland had already secured a sufficient number of votes to insure his election.[178]

The Cleveland administration lost no time in removing or suppressing the Republican postmasters and revenue officers in Virginia who formed such a vital part of the Republican machine.[179] This step helped pave the way for the next objective of the Democrats—to win the governorship. They made excellent use of their opportunity by the nomination of an unusually strong ticket, General Fitzhugh Lee, for governor, John E. Massey, for lieutenant governor, and Rufus A. Ayers, for attorney general.[180] Fitzhugh Lee was a nephew of Robert E. Lee, and a Civil War hero, both of which made him an extremely popular man. Parson Massey, too, had a large following in the State.

The Republicans, likewise, selected a strong ticket. Captain John S. Wise was nominated by acclamation for governor. He was the son of Henry A. Wise, who had served as chief executive of the State from

172 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 70.

173 *Ibid.* McGill Papers. Scrap Book, p. 63.

174 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* pp. 168, 169.

175 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXII, 46-62. *Riddleberger Papers.* William Mahone, Richmond, to H. H. Riddleberger, Aug. 16, 1884.

176 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," p. 70.

177 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 214. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 169. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* pp. 222-224.

178 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 70, 71.

179 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia,* p. 169.

180 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey,* pp. 258-260.

1856 to 1860. He was one of the Virginia Military Institute cadets who fought in the famous Battle of New Market, and had been wounded there.[181] On the ticket with Wise were Henry C. Wood, candidate for lieutenant governor, and Frank S. Blair, for attorney general.[182]

Early in the campaign Mahone declared that of all the various questions, "that of the Public Debt and the Free Schools most concern the mass of the people."[183] He asserted that these had been the paramount issues in the campaign between Cameron and Daniel in 1881, and that they were still supremely important. "Every voter," he said, "should have it brought home to him that in this election, if he votes for the Bourbon candidate, he votes to send John W. Daniel, with his School torch in one hand and the Funding Bill of 1871 in the other, to the Senate of the United States."[184] During the canvass several new issues of an ultra-democratic nature were introduced. Both candidates expressed themselves as favoring local option in the matter of liquor licenses, increased pensions for Confederate soldiers, free text-books for public schools, and various measures favorable to labor.[185]

The campaign was carried on diligently by Wise and Lee, with Mahone and Barbour directing the activities of the opposing parties.[186] Both candidates spoke frequently, but there were no joint discussions.[187] General Lee made use of "Uncle Robert's" saddle in riding from town to town and was given a rousing cheer wherever he spoke. He declared that he wished his name were Fitzhugh Smith in order that he might get some credit for himself—and also receive the vote of the Smith family.[188] The campaign was one of the most enjoyable Virginians had ever known and resulted in a heavy vote. Lee was victorious over Wise, and the Democrats won a large majority in each House of the Legislature.[189] Many Republicans claimed, however, that they had been robbed of a victory, and Mahone declared, "The Democrats have carried the state and legislative tickets by unscrupulous use of

181 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service*, p. 224.

182 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey*, p. 260.

183 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXIV, 2.

184 *Ibid.*

185 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, p. 169.

186 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXIV, 1-47.

187 Hancock, *Autobiography of John E. Massey*, p. 265.

188 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXIII, 8. Squires, *Land of Decision*, pp. 197-198.

189 According to the *Warrock-Richardson Almanack for the year 1888*, Lee received 152,544 votes and Wise got 136,510, or a majority of 16,034 for Lee. O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service*, pp. 224-226. Morton, *History of Virginia*, III, 215-217. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 169, 170.

election machinery, over which they have absolute control, and which was provided by their recent usurping legislation with this end in view."[190]

In the newly elected Senate there were twenty-nine Democrats and eleven Republicans, including one Independent Republican and one negro. In the House there were seventy-two Democrats and twenty-eight Republicans, including one negro.[191] With such an overwhelming majority in favor of the Democrats there was little question as to the selection of a United States Senator. In the Senate John W. Daniel received twenty-six votes and Mahone eight.[192] In the House, seventy votes were cast for Daniel and twenty-eight for Mahone.[193] Daniel was elected, therefore, by a joint vote of ninety-six to thirty-six to succeed Mahone as Senator in March, 1887.

Although Mahone had taken a leading part in each of the Virginia political campaigns he had by no means neglected his senatorial duties. And despite the anathemas which were hurled against him by his enemies his record in the Senate was one of which he might well be proud. He was denounced as a traitor to his party when he voted with the Republicans but his decision gave Virginia a prominence and an influence which she had not enjoyed since the War Between the States,[194] and the measures which he sponsored in the Senate clearly attested his love for Virginia and his diligence in behalf of her people.

Only a few of these measures need be mentioned here. Mahone had a part in raising the tariff rate on iron ore from fifty to seventy-five cents because he believed such an increase would promote prosperity in Virginia. The tax on tobacco was reduced from sixteen to eight cents

190 Squires, *Land of Decision*, p. 198. Speaking of John S. Wise's campaign in 1885, his son, Jennings C. Wise, says, "The near success of the revolution which he led, within twenty years after Appomattox and against General Fitz Lee, may well be said to have been a truly remarkable achievement. An analysis of the election returns of 1885 will show that 93 counties of Virginia gave him a substantial majority and that it was the fraudulent returns from the seven counties of the Black Belt that enabled Lee to be declared Governor. In the opinion of Governor McKinney and other Democrats, Wise was elected by a majority of not less than 25,000, and there can be no doubt he was supported by a large number of ex-Confederates despite the present-day Democratic propaganda which is designed to clothe the popular revolt of 1885 with the aspect of a combination between disloyal Virginians, Carpet-baggers and Negroes." *Personal Papers*. Jennings C. Wise, Washington, to N. M. Blake, July 17, 1930.

191 *Warrock-Richardson Almanack for the year 1886*, pp. 28, 29.

192 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia: begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond, on Wednesday, December 2, 1885, being the one hundred and tenth year of the Commonwealth*, Richmond, 1885, p. 84.

193 *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia for the session of 1885-1886*, Richmond, 1885, p. 82.

194 Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, p. 150.

a pound, by which it was estimated Virginia would save $2,500,000.00 annually in taxes. The postal service in the State was greatly improved by the addition of 600 miles of new postal routes and the establishment of 347 new post offices.[195]

Numerous appropriations were secured for public improvements in Virginia. A total of $379,500.00 was secured for public buildings, which included $112,500.00 at Harrisonburg, $92,000.00 at Abingdon, $25,000,00 at Lynchburg, and $150,000.00 at Richmond. Other appropriation bills which were passed included $100,000.00 for a wharf at Old Point, $20,000.00 for a sub-marine electric cable between Cape May and Cape Charles, $5,000.00 for enclosure and keeper's house at the Yorktown Monument, and $5,000.00 for an improvement of the Naval Hospital grounds at Portsmouth, making a total of $130,000.00.

Mahone secured the passage of other appropriation measures in the Senate which reached a total of $835,000.00, but these were blocked by an adverse vote in the Democratic House.[196]

During the six years that Mahone was a member of the Senate he introduced eighty-six bills, seventy-six of which related to Virginia, and twenty-one of which were passed.[197] In an open letter to the people of Virginia, Mahone's legislative record was reviewed in contrast to the records of Senators John W. Johnston and Robert E. Withers and those of Congressmen John R. Tucker, George C. Cabell, George D. Wise, John S. Barbour, Charles T. O'Ferrall and John W. Daniel.[198] This study, based upon official records, leads to the inevitable conclusion that Mahone's measures, "when considered with respect to their value, will be found to aggregate more of consequence to the State than all the bills passed by his predecessors in the Senate and the Democratic members of the House whose records are here given."[199]

Mahone's experience as a United States Senator unquestionably had

195 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," p. 10.

196 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "Mahone's six years' service in the Senate of the United States and the record of his Democratic Predecessors." Open letter by Mahone, 1887, pp. 10, 11. Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," p. 11.

197 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "Mahone's six years' service in the Senate of the United States and the record of his Democratic Predecessors," p. 60.

198 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Mahone's six years' service in the Senate of the United States and the record of his Democratic Predecessors," pp. 29-60.

199 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Mahone's six years' service in the Senate of the United States and the record of his Democratic Predecessors," p. 29.

a marked influence on his life and thought. This is apparent from a newspaper interview in which he is reported to have said:

I have stood upon Cemetery Hill and looked down on the scene of the great crater fight, and wondered in my heart if God could have any forgiveness for those men who led the South into that awful war, and are answerable for the blood, the misery, the ruin that followed. Yet under their teaching I was one of the most bitter and irreconcilable of all who flew to arms in the cause of the State and the Confederacy, and I never learned my wretched error, the awful blunder of the South, the curse of her institution of slavery and her traditions until I sat in the United States Senate, and day by day had borne in upon me the amazing significance of our form of government, what it meant, on what basis it was founded, how great and grand it was above any previous human effort, what it meant for humanity, and how much greater the nation was than any State.[200]

200 *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, pp. 50, 53.

CHAPTER IX: THE PARTY LEADER

> "He who would come among us, whether he be Democrat or Republican, whether he was with or against us in the late unhappy war, shall receive at my hands that friendly consideration which I would hope to enjoy at the hands of the people in any State in the Union. We cannot hope for that prosperity which belongs to Virginia by any continuance of sectional prejudices and policies. We are all *Americans* now." Statement of Mahone in a speech at Abingdon, Virginia, September 23, 1889.

DISAPPOINTED as Mahone must have been by the Democratic victory of 1885, no time was lost in preparing for the Congressional election of 1886. A survey of the situation in the State seemed to suggest the wisdom of nominating Republican candidates in only seven of the ten Congressional districts, omitting the sixth, seventh and eighth. The plan of selecting candidates, as proposed by the Republican State Committee, was that in the first, second, fourth, ninth and tenth districts nominations should be made by regularly elected delegates, while in the third and fifth districts they should be made at the discretion of the Congressional Committee for the district and the State executive committee. A letter to this effect was sent out by General Mahone, State chairman, shortly after a meeting of the committee at Richmond on June 26.[1]

The campaign was skillfully devised and vigorously executed by the Republican State Committee. The Democrats, on the other hand, were handicapped by the absence of John S. Barbour, the "Bourbon boss," who, according to the Republicans, was irritated by his defeat for the United States Senate in 1885 and was finding solace in a trip to Europe.[2] It was not surprising, therefore, that the campaign resulted in a victory for the Republicans who elected six members to Congress. In the sixth district an Independent Democrat was elected, while in the third, seventh, and eighth districts the regular Democratic candidates were victorious.[3]

Of greater significance to Mahone, however, was the campaign of 1887. In this "all-important election" nineteen members of the Virginia

1 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXV, 74.

2 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Virginia Republicans. With Cordial Recognition, they can Carry the State," 1887, pp. 4, 5.

3 Richmond *Dispatch,* Nov. 24, 1886.

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Senate and a full House of Delegates were to be chosen by the people.[4] A victory for either the Republicans or the Democrats would give that party control of the State Legislature for the next two years and greatly increase its chances of success in future campaigns. Moreover, upon the election of the Legislature would depend the selection of a United States Senator to succeed H. H. Riddleberger in 1889. The Democrats were intent on electing one of their number to serve with John W. Daniel in the Senate while the Republicans were no less eager to retain the seat for their party.

From the very first the campaign of 1887 was a contest between John S. Barbour and William Mahone. Barbour was consciously struggling for the United States Senatorship, the coveted prize which had been denied him in 1885, but which was now "pledged to him as the prize of success."[5] Mahone had the same objective in mind. In 1885 the Democratic Legislature had chosen Daniel to succeed him, but he entertained the hope, not without reason, that he would be elected to succeed Riddleberger if the Republicans were victorious in 1887.

On March 7 of that year Mahone issued a public letter in which he gave a review of his activities in the United States Senate during the past six years. His record of service, as well as that of other Senators and Representatives of Virginia, was clearly set forth in an Appendix, based upon the *Congressional Record.* This study led Mahone to declare that

> After a full examination of the whole record of my Democratic predecessors in the Senate, and of all of the Democratic Representatives in the House combined, I defiantly assert, that I have in six years accomplished more for the State and people of Virginia than all the Democrats together, since the State was restored to the Union;—that, measured by the number and *value* of bills relating to Virginia, introduced and passed, I have accomplished in six years more for the State and her people than all the Democrats from Virginia together in the Senate and the House.[6]

On August 4 the Democratic party held a convention at Roanoke and promulgated a platform. Its content was severely criticized in an "Address of the Republican State Committee" on August 18 in which the platform was described as nothing more than "a series of apologies for

4 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "William Mahone Campaign Letter of July 1, 1887," p. 1.

5 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Virginia Republicans. With Cordial Recognition, they can Carry the State," p. 5.

6 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "Mahone's six years' service in the Senate of the United States and the record of his Democratic Predecessors," p. 8.

their broken pledges."[7] The Democrats were accused of promising one thing and doing another—of claiming to be Democrats while they freely adopted well-established Republican principles. They believed that for a kingdom any oath might be forgotten, and were willing to "break a thousand oaths to reign one year."[8] The "Address" concluded with the statement that "It surely is a cheaply won and an easily retained trust which reposes in fancied security upon a cabal of shifty trimmers, who, denouncing Republicanism and professing Democracy, acquiesced in the State Republican platform in 1883 and have adopted the National Republican platform in 1887!"[9]

Many pamphlets were printed and widely circulated during the campaign. One of these defended "Republican Domination" and declared that the Republican régime in Virginia was responsible for the debt settlement, the promotion of public schools, the decreased taxation, the encouragement of humanitarian and charitable institutions, the extension of suffrage, and various other measures of general benefit to the people.[10] In numerous pamphlets the Bourbon régime was scathingly denounced. The nature of the criticism may be surmised from the titles of the pamphlets, three of which were, "Broken Promises. How the Bourbon and Barbour Democracy betray Faith;" "The Barbour Blight! Points and Proofs for the People;" and "Food for Thought! Bourbon Bluffing."[11] Mahone outlined a plan of campaign which involved "systematic organization by precincts," and urged his workers to put it into active operation since, he said, "it is the only safeguard we have against the opposition's use of money and their methods."[12]

The campaign came to a close in November and resulted in a Demo-

7 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Virginia. Campaign of 1887. Address of the Republican State Committee," by William Mahone, 1887, p. 3.

8 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Virginia. Campaign of 1887. Address of the Republican State Committee," p. 21.

9 *Ibid.* Pamphlets. "Virginia. Campaign of 1887. Address of the Republican State Committee," p. 23.

10 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "'Republican Domination.' What it has done for Virginia. A brilliant record! What it will do for the Commonwealth if restored to power."

11 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Broken Promises. How the Bourbon and Barbour Democracy betray Faith." *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The Barbour Blight! Points and Proofs for the People." *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Food for Thought! Bourbon Bluffing." Other interesting pamphlets were as follows: *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The What is it! Is it the Whangdoodle or Gyascutis? 'Everything by starts and nothing long.' Mr. Barbour's bamboozling beggar's opera! as performed in the Opera House at Roanoke, with Democratic and other critiques on the performance and performers." *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The Barbour Dynasty contrasted with the 'Mahone Dynasty.'" A reply to Hon. John S. Barbour's Pungoteague Letter, by William Mahone, 1887.

12 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "William Mahone Campaign Letter of July 1, 1887," p. 6.

cratic triumph in both the Senate and the House.[13] Again the Republicans claimed that they had been robbed of a victory by fraud and corruption which were made possible by Democratic control of the election machinery.[14] The legislative victory carried with it the election of a United States Senator. Barbour and Mahone were nominated to succeed Riddleberger in March, 1889, and the former was elected by a large majority.[15]

The recent reverses of the Republican party and the disappointment of certain individuals to reach the political heights to which they aspired led to a schism in the party in 1888. The first specific threat in this direction was found in a letter of John S. Wise addressed "to the Republican voters of Virginia" on March 15, 1888. In this message Wise expressed the opinion that there was a deep-seated dissatisfaction in the Republican party which was due to the feeling of the people "that the present plan of organization does not give them any rights or voice; that it is too military, and that it places too much power in the hands of the chairman."[16] Accordingly, he served notice that at the coming State convention he would move to change the present form of organization and would likewise oppose the "unit rule." He described the "unit rule" as "gag rule" and was especially hostile to it since it was rumored that Mahone "was trying to pack the delegation for Mr. Sherman and bind it by the unit rule."[17] He declared that he had already begged General Mahone not to urge the "unit rule," and maintained that in raising these questions he entertained only the kindliest personal feelings toward him.

On March 20 Wise's letter was followed by an appeal to a number of "true Republicans" urging them to coöperate with him in effecting a change in the plan of party organization and in defeating the "unit rule." On these two points, he declared, he was right and Mahone was wrong. He was convinced, however, that Mahone would not be moved by argument, and the only way in which he could be stopped would be by the firm refusal of his friends "to go his way." Wise affirmed that he was making this appeal not as a personal antagonist but as a warm

13 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service*, p. 226.

14 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Virginia Republicans. With Cordial Recognition, they can Carry the State," p. 5.

15 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia: begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond, on Wednesday, December 7, 1887, being the one hundred and eleventh year of the Commonwealth,* Richmond, 1887, pp. 54, 55, 79, 81, 82, 86.

16 *Mahone Collection,* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 39.

17 *Ibid.*

friend of Mahone, and maintained that he favored the General for State chairman because he believed that no one else could serve the party half so well. On the other hand, he declared, he and his friends should not act against their feeling and judgment merely in order to please Mahone. "We have indulged Gen. Mahone in this way long enough through a false friendship."[18]

> Fed thus by our own folly, the result is that he has become more and more exacting, until now he thinks it disloyalty to party and to friendship for anyone to oppose him. He does not mix with the people as we do. He does not know how odious some of the things he proposes are to the people. And we have let friendship make us weak and yielding until General Mahone has injured the party and himself. Now let us be affectionate and kind with him, but firm and unyielding in our demands that these things be amended.[19]

Not long afterwards an open letter was sent out "to the Republican Voters of Virginia" urging upon them the necessity of changing the plan of party organization and of defeating the "unit rule;" and appealing to them to elect delegates to the State convention at Petersburg on May 17, 1888, who would take steps to realize these objectives. The letter was signed by a "Committee of Conference" which was composed of John F. Lewis, William E. Cameron, Jacob Yost, John S. Wise, V. D. Groner, J. A. Frazier, J. D. Brady, D. F. Houston, S. M. Yost, W. C. Pendleton, G. K. Gilmer, and C. C. Clarke.[20] This roll of names, as may be seen at a glance, included many of Mahone's warmest friends of the last few years.

Wise's letter to the Republican voters brought a number of responses, many of which appeared in print. W. C. Elam expressed the opinion that the address constituted "a break with the chairman, the organization and the present managerial policy of the party," which had been "made upon a sudden impulse" by one who was "not accustomed to deliberation and reticence."[21] The same sentiment was expressed by A. H. Lindsay who wrote Wise, "Your enemies have long charged that, while you were brilliant, yet it was always safe to predict that you would either do or say something that would counteract all the good that you might do."[22] Another writer on the subject made this discerning statement:

> My own opinion is that those who object to the present plan of organization only use it as a pretext. If your plan is adopted they will soon find something

18 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 42.
19 *Ibid.*
20 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 46.
21 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 44.
22 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 43. Conversations with Senator Carter Glass.

else to kick about, their primary object being to make General Mahone step down and out. When that occurs, the party will soon be in a comatose state, as it was for years previous to 1879.[23]

The most comprehensive and irrefutable answer came from Mahone. He declared, to begin with, that it was not only interesting but of considerable significance that Wise's letter "to the Republican voters of Virginia" should have appeared first in the Richmond *Dispatch,* the leading Democratic organ in the State. Turning, then, to the objections which Wise had raised, he expressed surprise that the present plan of party organization should be regarded as "a denial of popular sovereignty" when it was substantially the same plan which had been adopted in 1879 at Mozart Hall and had been reënacted by overwhelming majorities at all of the State conventions since that time. "It is not for Capt. Wise, nor any individual, to dictate a plan for the party," he said. "That is for its convention, acting upon the report and recommendation of its authorized committee."[24] Mahone likewise defended the "unit rule," describing it as a system by which the delegation votes either according to the instructions of those whom it represents or according to a majority of its members, "where the chairman has no more voice than any other delegate, and is as liable to be overruled as anybody else."[25] Therefore, he concluded, opposition to the "unit rule" can come only "from a desire that the majority shall not control, but that not only a minority, but every individual, shall act independently."[26]

When the Republican State Convention assembled at the Opera House in Petersburg on May 17, 1888, the threatened disruption of the party was consummated. Early in the meeting Wise raised objections to the manner in which the convention was being conducted and in the evening session, in a spirited speech, he invited all those who were opposed to the "unit rule" to retire with him from the hall and hold a convention of their own.[27] Approximately eighty delegates withdrew at this time, leaving about six hundred delegates to continue the proceedings.[28] Colonel William Lamb served as chairman of the convention, and Asa Rogers as secretary.[29] The convention voted to con-

23 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 41.
24 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 47.
25 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 48.
26 *Ibid.*
27 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 51, 52.
28 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVII, 1.
29 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 52.

tinue the present plan of party organization and accepted the "unit rule" by declaring that all delegates and alternates to the Chicago Convention should vote "as a majority of the delegates shall agree."[30] A party platform was adopted and the Chicago delegation was elected, including delegates and electors at large and representatives from each of the Congressional districts. General Mahone was named as one of the four delegates at large.[31] A State executive committee was elected composed of William Mahone, Edmund Waddill, Junior, and Stith Bolling.[32]

The "Anti-Mahone" Republican Convention quickly assembled at the Library Hall in Petersburg, only a short distance from the regular State Convention. The meeting was called to order by V. D. Groner, and C. C. Clarke was asked to act as secretary.[33] Speeches were made by D. F. Houston, Edgar Allan, John S. Wise, R. A. Paul, H. H. Riddleberger, Jacob Yost and several others in which Mahone was denounced and the "unit rule" condemned.[34] A plan of party organization was presented by the committee and adopted. Delegates and electors at large were chosen for the Chicago Convention, and it was provided that the remaining representatives should be elected in the Congressional districts. Colonel D. F. Houston, of Roanoke, was elected chairman of the State committee.[35]

The Republican National Convention assembled at Chicago on ~~July~~ June 19, 1888. One of the knotty problems with which it had to deal was the seating of the Virginia delegates. Mahone and Wise were present with their respective delegations and each sought to impress the convention with the justice of his claim.[36] After much discussion and dissension a compromise was effected whereby seats were awarded to Mahone and a portion of his delegates and, at the same time, to most of the district delegates who had been elected in accordance with the

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 52, 53.

32 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 53. Other reports of the Convention are found in *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVII, 22-28; and *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Abstract of the Proceedings of the State Convention of the Republican Party, held in the city of Petersburg on the 17th day of May, 1888."

33 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVII, 37.

34 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 53, 54.

35 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 54. Another report of the Convention is found in *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVII, 28, 29.

36 Among the numerous pamphlets which set forth the claims of the rival factions were *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The Virginia Delegation, 1888"; and *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The Virginia Case. Notes in answer to the vague and unfounded allegations and insinuations of the address put forth by the bolters from the late Republican State Convention of Virginia, held at Petersburg, May 17, 1888."

Wise plan.[37] Mahone strongly favored the nomination of John Sherman for President, but the choice eventually fell upon Benjamin Harrison of Indiana, with Levi P. Morton of New York as the nominee for Vice President.[38]

In Virginia the rival factions within the Republican party were able at length to agree upon an electoral ticket which was headed by William Lamb and Frank S. Blair.[39] This was followed by a heated campaign not only between the Harrison and Cleveland electors, but also between the Congressional candidates. The vote was unusually large and extremely close, resulting in a count of 151,977 for Cleveland and 150,438 for Harrison, a bare majority of 1,539 for Cleveland.[40] Republicans were elected in the first and second Congressional districts while the Democrats were successful in carrying the eight remaining districts.[41] Virginia's twelve electoral votes were given to Cleveland, but Harrison was the successful candidate.[42]

In December, 1888, the Republican State Committee met at Petersburg in response to a call of Judge Edmund Waddill, Junior, and General Stith Bolling, members of the State executive committee. Resolutions were adopted congratulating General Benjamin Harrison upon his election, and recommending the appointment of General Mahone as Postmaster General, "that position being one for which his fine administrative qualities admirably fit him, and in which he would be sure to best serve his country and his party."[43] Mahone's appointment was urged in a "confidential" letter of William Lamb,[44] and in the fol-

37 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVII, 8-17.

38 In a letter to Mahone dated Aug. 29, 1891, H. C. Parsons gives a critical review of Mahone's political career. He declares that in 1888 Mahone desired united action in support of Sherman at the Chicago Convention because, so Mahone said, Blaine wanted to secure the State and had made "a corrupt political bargain that proved his hatred toward Southern Republicans and his disloyalty to his party." In view of these circumstances, Parsons avers, it was not surprising that Mahone and his delegates were practically expelled at Chicago, and Harrison given the nomination. *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, H. C. Parsons, Natural Bridge, Virginia, to William Mahone, Aug. 29, 1891. Even Mahone confessed that in spite of his loyalty to the Republican party he "had hard work to keep from being kicked out in Chicago." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, William Mahone, Washington, to J. S. Clarkson Dec. 24, 1889. (Copy of letter retained.)

39 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVII, 33. *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVIII, 2, 16.

40 Richmond *Dispatch,* Nov. 27, 1888.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Warrock-Richardson Almanack for 1889,* p. 26.

43 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXVIII, 52.

44 One of these letters, dated Jan 3, 1889, was sent to Captain J. A. Bristow, Stormount, Virginia. Lamb recommended Mahone's appointment, declaring that "He has the ability, courage and fortune to enable him to withstand the social frowns and financial ostracism of that southern Bourbonism, which has caused so many

lowing weeks considerable interest was manifested in the matter both in Virginia and outside of the State.[45] A delegation headed by Judge Waddill visited General Harrison at Indianapolis and came away with the conviction that if a southern man was appointed to the cabinet it would be General Mahone.[46] Harrison's choice for Postmaster General, however, fell upon John Wanamaker of Pennsylvania,[47] Mahone's defeat probably being due in a large measure to Blaine's influence with the President.[48]

After the inauguration of Harrison on March 4, 1889, the Virginians turned their attention to the gubernatorial contest at home. Several outstanding Democrats were aspirants to the office, including Philip W. McKinney, a distinguished lawyer of Farmville, Richard A. Beirne, editor of the Richmond *State,* Charles T. O'Ferrall, four times elected to Congress, John T. Harris, a former member of Congress for ten years, and Samuel W. Venable, a prominent and worthy citizen. On the second ballot McKinney was nominated for governor, followed by Beirne and O'Ferrall.[49] J. Hoge Tyler received the nomination for lieutenant governor, and R. Taylor Scott for attorney general.

The Republican State Convention assembled at Norfolk on August 22. There were still dissatisfied elements in the party but an overwhelming majority of the Republicans favored Mahone.[50] Nearly fifteen hundred delegates, most of whom were white, were present from all sections of the State. There was an outburst of applause as Mahone came on the platform, and repeated cries to the effect that "they can't down you, General," "you will lead us again," "give it to them," and "we are with you."[51] Hon. H. C. Wood of Scott County served as temporary chairman and George E. Bowden of Norfolk was elected permanent chairman. The party platform was read by W. C. Elam, and adopted by the convention.[52] General Mahone was nominated for governor by William Lamb, the motion was enthusiastically seconded by a

of our leaders to weaken in faith and finally to prove traitors to our cause." *J. C. Bristow Papers,* Richmond, Virginia, William Lamb, Norfolk, to J. A. Bristow, Jan 3, 1889.

45 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXVIII, 51, 52. *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXIX, 1-19. Richmond *Dispatch,* Feb. 6, 1889.

46 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXIX, 7.

47 *Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the year 1889,* New York, 1890, p. 803.

48 Richmond *Dispatch,* March 1, 1889.

49 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 226. Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 200.

50 *Washington Post,* Aug. 21, 1889. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XLI, 1.

51 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XLI, 3.

52 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XLI, 3, 4.

number of delegates, and quickly carried by the convention without a dissenting voice.[53] In like manner Colonel Campbell Slemp of Lee County was nominated for lieutenant governor. Several men were suggested for attorney general, but when the other candidates had withdrawn, Captain W. S. Lurty of Harrisonburg received the nomination.[54] Before adjourning, the convention elected a State executive committee of five members composed of William Mahone, Stith Bolling, Edmund Waddill, Junior, George E. Bowden and William Lamb.[55]

The nomination of Mahone in 1889 clearly indicates that he had weathered the storm of dissension and schism in 1888 and that he was still the outstanding leader of the Virginia Republicans. Except as a personal vindication, however, Mahone was not at all interested in receiving the nomination in 1889.[56] Conditions were now very different from what they had been in 1877 when he had fought so fiercely for this honor. Since that time he had served as a United States Senator and had experienced both the gratifications and disappointments of political struggle. More than that, he was now a much older man, being in his sixty-third year. In spite of his personal feeling in the matter, however, Mahone accepted the nomination, declaring to the convention, "I have yet to refuse to obey the will of my party."[57] He pledged his best efforts to the success of the campaign and urged the coöperation of all Republicans in overthrowing Bourbon supremacy in Virginia and restoring "a government of the people, for the people and by the people."[58]

During the campaign numerous pamphlets were circulated by the Republicans and the Democrats. One of the most influential of the Republican pamphlets was entitled, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam." It began by recalling Mahone's devotion to Virginia both in war and in peace. He was described as "a man of the people" and one who could be under-

53 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XLI, 4.

54 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XLI, 5.

55 *Ibid.*

56 In characteristic fashion Mahone told Judge Edmund Waddill, Junior, that he had been nominated for the governorship at Norfolk by a bunch of "damn fools." Under the Anderson-McCormick Act of 1884 the Democrats had control of the election machinery and Mahone saw little prospect of a Republican victory. He was defeated, very much as he anticipated, by the "unparalleled devices" of the Democrats, according to one of his friends, who stated, "Our election law is without a parallel in free government. The decisions of our friends have been at times as arbitrary as the decrees of Balmaceda." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, H. C. Parsons, Natural Bridge, Virginia, to William Mahone, Aug. 29, 1891.

57 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XLI, 4.

58 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XLI, 5.

stood and appreciated only "by the people themselves." He was praised for his liberalism and for his belief in "a fair show and an equal opportunity" for all citizens.[59]

Elam characterized the "Mahone rule" from 1879 to 1884 as "a calamity for the rascals who were turned out" but "a blessing to the State and her people." During this period, he pointed out, the debt settlement was affected, the tax rate was decreased, the free schools were promoted, the humanitarian institutions were assisted, the whipping-post was abolished, the suffrage of the people was extended, and popular government was again restored. And while Mahone was a member of the Senate, Elam continued, he labored on behalf of Virginia and her people "with a solicitude and success never paralleled by any of his predecessors."[60]

Mahone had been severely criticized, the writer said, because he turned Republican. He maintained, however, that the same course should be followed by all good, true and intelligent Virginians who desired to destroy Bourbonism, to maintain a protective tariff, to repeal the tobacco tax, to secure the millions of the Blair School Bill for the free schools, and to end the race and sectional strife which Bourbonism fostered and perpetuated.[61] The pamphlet concluded with a tirade against Bourbonism and a condemnation of the Democratic rule in Virginia which, it asserted, had been characterized by extravagance, mismanagement, fraud, corruption, increased taxation, partisan legislation, and a woeful neglect of the public schools of the State.[62]

One of the most bitter pamphlets directed against Mahone was entitled, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone." It declared that he had nominated himself for governor at Norfolk "against the will of the Republicans of the State." He had been forsaken, the writer continued, by many of the outstanding Republicans and Readjusters of former days who had expressed themselves as being unwilling to follow "the personal rule of any man." His following consisted entirely of negroes, disorganized Republicans, old Democratic Readjusters who had failed to return to the Demo-

59 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," pp. 3-5.

60 *Ibid.* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," pp. 9-11.

61 *Ibid.* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," pp. 11, 12.

62 *Ibid.* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," pp. 12-14.

cratic party in 1883, and deserters from the Democratic fold who had come to him with the hope of being well repaid for their support.[63]

On September 2, 1889, McKinney opened his campaign with a speech at Charlottesville.[64] This was answered by Mahone in a speech at Abingdon on September 23, when he discussed in detail the vital issues facing Virginians at that time. His first plea was in defense of a free ballot:

> Our civilization has never been exposed to so great a peril as by the political policy which teaches that *anything is right* that may conduce and contribute to the defeat of a candidate for any office. If the lawless doctrine that the *means* are justified by the end is to govern, where is its application to stop? what security will be left to any class of the population not slaves to the caprice of the power thus enthroned?[65]

Mahone next turned his attention to the "color-line," and ridiculed the idea that Democrats really feared that the negro could ever gain the ascendancy in political matters.

> This pretended concern for the safety of our civilization is merely to mislead and turn away the more thoughtless and gullible of our population from the exercise of their political rights in the direction of their own convictions and interests.
>
> It is employed as a mere scare-crow to excite prejudice and fear, in the hope of diverting the white working-man from casting his ballot for the candidate he honestly prefers.[66]

In support of his contention that there was no need to fear negro supremacy in Virginia, Mahone pointed out that in the twenty-two legislative districts where the negroes had a majority of the voting population, at the last election seven white Democrats, ten white Republicans, and five colored Republicans were elected to the General Assembly.[67]

Upholding the value of the negro to the State Mahone declared not only that "the colored man is here to stay," but also that "he is an essential factor in and to our labor system."[68]

63 *Ibid.* Vol. 4, "Characteristic Facts in the Business and Political Career of Gen. William Mahone," p. 1.

64 *Mahone Collection.* Pamphlets, "Republican Campaign Document. Speech of Hon. P. W. McKinney, Democratic nominee for Governor, delivered at Charlottesville, September 2nd, 1889, with comments thereon."

65 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "The Vital Virginia Issues. A speech by General William Mahone, Republican Nominee for Governor of Virginia, delivered at Abingdon, Va., Sept. 23rd, 1889," p. 2.

66 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 3.

67 *Ibid.*

68 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 4.

His place cannot be supplied. He is in great measure the life-giving power to all our industrial pursuits. His labor contributes to the wealth of the State, and the more we enlarge his capabilities and stimulate his efforts the greater will be his contributions.

We want here no condition of serfdom, if we would advance our civilization and promote the peace, happiness and prosperity of all.

The colored man is by instinct a Republican, and naturally a protectionist, as, in my judgment, every man who is dependent upon the sweat of his own brow ought to be.[69]

Mahone defended a protective tariff as opposed to free trade, asserting that "protection" was "the thought of the fathers of our Republic, as the means of fortifying our independence and of ensuring the progress, power and wealth of our nation."[70]

Slavery, no matter where or in what form it existed, has been and is the consort of free trade. The South, prior to the war, was for free trade because it lived and yet languished by slave labor. It was there that the class which owned no slaves and was dependent upon the sweat of their brow for sustenance was kept back and down in the race of life by the enforced competition with slave labor.[71]

The protective policy of the United States from 1861 to 1880, he affirmed, was largely responsible for the increased population and wealth of the country, the growth of export trade, and the remarkable agricultural and industrial development.[72]

He who would have a diversified industry and create home markets for the products of the farm, the animal, the forest, the garden, the orchard and the dairy; open our mines, utilize our water power, advance the welfare of the working classes, improve our civilization and promote the happiness of the people—our own people—should vote the Republican ticket and for protection.[73]

Mahone expressed his opposition to the internal revenue system, particularly to the "iniquitous tax" on tobacco, declaring that "neither the National Treasury nor the demands upon the Government need the revenue of an exigency tax."[74]

The surplus which burdens the National Treasury might readily have been reduced, and the money hoarded there returned to circulation, by the abolition of the tax on tobacco and the passage of the Blair Bill; and for the failure of these measures the representatives of the Democratic party in Congress are solely responsible, as the record proves.[75]

69 *Ibid.*
70 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 6.
71 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 7.
72 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," pp. 8-13.
73 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 10.
74 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 13.
75 *Ibid.*

On the public school question he took an unequivocal stand, affirming that the proper education of the growing generation was the surest means of improving American civilization and advancing the general welfare. He expressed himself as being in complete accord with the Republican Platform of 1888 which read:

> In a republic like ours, where the citizen is the sovereign and the official the servant; where no power is exercised except by the will of the people, it is important that the sovereign—the people—should possess intelligence. The free school is the promoter of that intelligence, which is to preserve us as a free Nation; therefore the State or Nation, or both combined, should support free institutions of learning sufficient to afford to every child growing up in the land the opportunity of a good common school education.[76]

Referring to the State debt Mahone said:

> I have never believed that the people of this State desired a settlement with our creditors upon any other basis than that which recognized every dollar of her equitable share of the debt of the undivided State, and that it should be refunded at a rate of interest that would enable them to meet its annual demand and keep house.[77]

Under Democratic leadership, Mahone asserted, the public debt had once again been brought to an unsettled condition which seriously discredited the honor of the State. He claimed that he knew how a satisfactory disposition of the question could be effected but at the same time expressed an unwillingness to reveal the plan lest it should be immediately adopted by the Democratic managers who would say, "me-too."[78]

Mahone believed that Virginia's prosperity would be promoted by immigration and the investment of capital. Accordingly, he extended a welcome to the stranger, and declared that

> he who would come among us, whether he be Democrat or Republican, whether he was with or against us in the late unhappy war, shall receive at my hands that friendly consideration which I would hope to enjoy at the hands of the people in any State in the Union. We cannot hope for that prosperity which belongs to Virginia by any continuance of sectional prejudices and policies. We are all *Americans* now.[79]

On the platform Mahone made a picturesque figure, one that could not easily be forgotten. A contemporary writer has described him as follows:

> He was short in stature, spare almost to emaciation, with long beard and keen, restless eyes. His dress was peculiar. He always wore a gray slouch hat,

76 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 15.
77 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 17.
78 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," pp. 15-17.
79 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Vital Virginia Issues," p. 16.

Election of 1889

STATE OF VIRGINIA

Scale

10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 Miles

1918

• Location of County Seat

▨ Majority for Mahone

□ Majority for McKinney

VIRGINIA

WEST

KENTUCKY

TENNESSEE

NORTH CAROLINA

MARYLAND

CHESAPEAKE BAY

POTOMAC RIVER

RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER

YORK RIVER

JAMES RIVER

BALTIMORE

ALEXANDRIA CO

WASHINGTON

FREDERICK

CLARKE

LOUDOUN

WARREN

FAIRFAX

FAUQUIER

SHENANDOAH

PRINCE WILLIAM

RAPPAHANNOCK

ROCKINGHAM

PAGE

CULPEPER

MADISON

STAFFORD

KING GEORGE

HIGHLAND

AUGUSTA

GREENE

ORANGE

SPOTSYLVANIA

BATH

ALBEMARLE

CAROLINE

ESSEX

LOUISA

ALLEGHANY

ROCKBRIDGE

NELSON

FLUVANNA

HANOVER

KING AND QUEEN

KING WILLIAM

AMHERST

BUCKINGHAM

GOOCHLAND

HENRICO

NEW KENT

JAMES CITY

BOTETOURT

POWHATAN

RICHMOND

CHESTERFIELD

MATHEWS

CRAIG

ROANOKE

BEDFORD

APPOMATTOX

AMELIA

CHARLES CITY

GLOUCESTER

CAMPBELL

PRINCE EDWARD

NOTTOWAY

YORK

ELIZABETH CITY

BUCHANAN

GILES

MONTGOMERY

TAZEWELL

BLAND

DICKENSON

WISE

PULASKI

CHARLOTTE

LUNENBURG

DANVILLE

SURRY

RUSSELL

SMYTH

WYTHE

FRANKLIN

FLOYD

ISLE OF WIGHT

SUSSEX

SCOTT

WASHINGTON

PITTSYLVANIA

HALIFAX

MECKLENBURG

BRUNSWICK

SOUTHAMPTON

NANSEMOND

PRINCESS ANNE

NORFOLK

LEE

GRAYSON

CARROLL

PATRICK

HENRY

peg-top trousers, that caused his small, narrow feet to look exceedingly effeminate, and made a most noticeable display of shirt-bosom and cuffs. His voice was thin and piping—almost falsetto in its tone.[80]

As a speaker Mahone furnished a marked contrast to McKinney in appearance, delivery and subject matter. His speeches were always carefully prepared but lacked emotional content. They read better than they sounded. McKinney's speeches, on the other hand, were less informing but more popular in their appeal.[81]

Mahone delivered a few addresses during the campaign but made no effort to canvass the State. However, he wrote a great deal and the party literature was widely distributed. As in the past he displayed remarkable ability and energy in organizing the campaign and in directing the activity of his lieutenants and subalterns.[82] Although he always carried on a large correspondence this was particularly true during the period of the campaign when thousands of letters poured in to his office from all sections of the State regarding the progress of the canvass.[83]

Mahone had to contend not only with the Democratic opposition but also with the disgruntled Republicans.[84] A number of these "bolters" gathered at Richmond on October 1 and prepared an address to the Republicans of Virginia which asserted "That the defeat of William Mahone is essential to the salvation of the Republican party."[85] Among those who signed the circular were John S. Wise, William E. Cameron, V. D. Groner, James A. Frazier, William C. Pendleton and C. A. Heermans. Nothing was left undone to defeat Mahone, his enemies even going so far as to cast aspersions on his military record.[86] In certain cases negro votes were bought by the Democrats, but as a rule they remained loyal to their old leaders.[87]

The election took place on Tuesday, November 5, 1889. On the following morning the *Dispatch* proclaimed the glad tidings that McKinney had been elected by a large majority and that Virginia had

80 Richmond *Dispatch,* Oct. 9, 1895.

81 Conversations with Senator Carter Glass.

82 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 226.

83 Not less than five thousand letters were received by Mahone during September and October, just previous to the November election. These are carefully preserved in the *Mahone Collection.*

84 *Ibid.* Pamphlets, "Protest of Virginia Republicans against William Mahone for Governor."

85 *Riddleberger Papers.* "To the Republicans of Virginia."

86 O'Ferrall, *Forty Years of Active Service,* p. 227.

87 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 295.

eluded "the clutches of Billy Mahone."[88] In a total of 285,471 votes, McKinney received 164,212, and Mahone 121,259, or a majority of 42,953 for McKinney.[89] Mahone carried only twenty-six counties, most of which were in the eastern portion of the State with a few in the southern and southwestern sections. It is not without significance, however, that in spite of the combined opposition of Democrats and "insurgent" Republicans he received approximately three-sevenths of the total vote cast in the State.

A few days after the election Mahone received a letter from Warren S. Lurty, the defeated candidate for attorney general, lamenting the Republican defeat and affirming that the Democrats in carrying the election in the vicinity of Harrisonburg had made a liberal use of money and liquor. He continued:

> I regret the result more than you can, and if it were within my power I would cheerfullly transfer to you every vote I got if it could have elected you. One thing I desire to say I had rather been your companion in defeat than been elected with any man in Virginia. It is an honor to have been associated with you in the noble effort to rescue our state that is worth the wearings of any scar and I am proud of it. . . . I have nothing to regret in the campaign. I am proud of you as a man, a General, as a politician leader, and a Virginian.[90]

Regarding the campaign Mahone, in a personal letter, asserted, "It was not my wish at any time to make the fight in Vir[ginia] but I could not escape it, without being misunderstood." He declared that "Everybody there—Republicans and Democrats—believed that we could win," and asserted that all outside of Brady, Groner and their

88 Richmond *Dispatch,* Nov. 6, 1889. The hostile feeling on the part of many Virginians toward Mahone was manifested by an incident in Petersburg on the night of the election. Rejoicing over the advance reports of McKinney's victory, a crowd of people gathered in front of Mahone's residence on South Market Street to stage a mock celebration. Their reckless use of fireworks soon threatened to set fire to the house which had recently been coated with oil preparatory to painting. Suddenly Mahone and his son, Butler, appeared on the front porch, called attention to the hazard which was involved, and exhorted the crowd to desist. When they failed to heed the warning and became even more threatening in their actions Butler fired into the crowd, slightly wounding one of the participants. A cry was raised against Mahone, his arrest was demanded, and he was forthwith escorted to the police station accompanied by the noisy crowd. Mahone's poise and fearlessness on the occasion were characteristic of the man and won the admiration of even his political enemies. The unfortunate affair was soon adjusted, as was suggested in a letter which came to Mahone from Harrisonburg, "Everybody over here even the Democrats heartily condemn the Mayor of your city and all concerned about your arrest. I have not the least idea that anything will come of it." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Warren S. Lurty, Harrisonburg, Virginia, to William Mahone, Nov. 8, 1889.

89 *Warrock-Richardson Almanack for 1891.*

90 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Warren S. Lurty, Harrisonburg, Virginia, to William Mahone, Nov. 8, 1889.

associates were convinced that he "was fully ten thousand white votes stronger than any one else of the party." Mahone affirmed that the coolest headed men in the Republican party believed that he "got full five thousand Democratic votes," and at the same time maintained that "it was the fright into which the Democratic managers were thrown which caused them to overdue [sic] the fraud."[91]

Disappointed by the outcome of the campaign in 1889 Mahone's friends renewed their efforts to secure for him some appropriate governmental appointment. Although he had not been favored by a position in Harrison's cabinet it appears that he and the President, who had served together in the Senate,[92] were on cordial terms.[93] In a personal letter to a prominent Republican leader Mahone had written, "I took my seat on the Republican side of the Chamber of my own volition, not asking and not having presented to me any consideration for so doing, but because I believed in the principles of the Republican party . . . . not failing to realize the ostracism and abuse that followed such exercise of judgment and political assignment."[94] It would seem only natural, nevertheless, that Mahone should expect friendly consideration at the hands of the party whose principles he had so loyally upheld.

Apparently Harrison had in mind the appointment of Mahone to a position as Foreign Minister. This is disclosed in a letter from the President to Senator John Sherman, a portion of which reads as follows:

I do not know whether it is known to you, but I have sounded General Mahone's friends as to two places for him: First, Brazil; and second, Spain. While it was at one time thought that he and his family would like a foreign appointment, I was told that his business had assumed such a shape that he could not leave the country. You will readily see that it is very difficult to find any place at home the compensation of which would be an object to him. I think you know, and I am sure he knows that I have a very high regard for the sterling qualities of General Mahone.[95]

91 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, William Mahone, Washington, to J. S. Clarkson, Dec. 24, 1889. (Copy of letter retained.)

92 Mahone and Harrison were seated in close proximity in the Senate Chamber. *Ibid.* Manuscripts, George C. Gorham, Washington, to William Mahone, Feb. 18, 1881.

93 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Benjamin Harrison, Executive Mansion, to William Mahone, April 22, 1889.

94 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, William Mahone, Washington, to J. S. Clarkson, Dec. 24, 1889. (Copy of letter retained.)

95 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Benjamin Harrison, Executive Mansion, to John Sherman, Oct. 2, 1890. This personal letter was sent to Mahone by Senator Sherman who stated, "I had a conversation with him and he expressed a desire to give you a good appointment, and intimated, as he says in his letter, that he has invited you to accept a mission abroad."

Mahone's family is reported to have favored his acceptance of an appointment as Minister, but such a position made little appeal to him. As a matter of fact, as suggested in the President's letter, it was almost imperative that Mahone should remain in the United States where he could give proper attention to his investments in the coal fields of southwestern Virginia and his real estate speculations in the District of Columbia. Some interested party, it is said, suggested that Mahone be appointed as Minister to China, but Harrison opposed this declaring that he didn't think Mahone would make a very good missionary![96]

Mahone's defeat for the governorship in 1889 brought a decided check to Republican activity in Virginia.[97] Those who had declared that his defeat was "essential to the salvation of the Republican party" found instead that it was accompanied by a general collapse of the party. Realizing the strength of the Democrats in the State and conscious of their control of the election machinery, Mahone, in the campaign of 1891, advised the Republicans to give way to the Alliance party. This action was severely criticized by H. C. Parsons of Natural Bridge, who, in a letter to Mahone as chairman of the Republican State Committee declared that this would mean the delivery of the Republican vote to the Southern Alliance which "does not cease to denounce every Republican principle and to openly protest its pure Democracy." "Because you were able to lead twenty thousand Democrats into the Republican camp," he wrote, "is that any reason why you should now lead one hundred and fifty thousand Republicans back with you into either camp of the Democracy?"[98] The general apathy of the Republicans throughout the State was clearly evident, however, when only three Republicans were elected to the General Assembly and there were no negroes in the State Senate for the first time since 1867.[99]

In 1892 the Populist ticket made its appearance in Virginia, but Mahone supported Harrison rather than Weaver for the Presidency. In several of the Congressional districts, however, Populist nominees were supported by the Republicans. The following year the Republicans made no nominations either for governor or the State Legislature.

96 Conversations with Edmund Waddill, Junior.

97 Writing to Mahone shortly after the election in 1889, Warren S. Lurty said, "I see no hope for Republicanism in V[irgini]a," and added, "I am going to leave the state." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Warren S. Lurty, Harrisonburg, to William Mahone, Nov. 8, 1889.

98 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, H. C. Parsons, Natural Bridge, Virginia, to William Mahone, Aug. 29, 1891.

99 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 297.

There was no fusion of Republicans and Populists, but Mahone indirectly aided the latter party. Again in 1894 there was no coalition of the parties and the Republicans displayed increased activity in certain sections of the State. In 1895, however, there was an approximation of fusion with the local candidates running as "honest election" men.[100] During this period Mahone continued to serve as chairman of the Republican State Committee with his official headquarters in Petersburg. His last participation in Virginia politics was in connection with the "honest elections" conference held in that city in 1895.[101]

During these years, however, Mahone spent considerable time in Washington devoting his attention to financial matters with the hope of rebuilding his fortune. Generally he stopped at the Chamberlain Hotel which was famous for its cuisine, and patronized largely by statesmen, artists, writers, actors, and sportsmen.[102] In his investments and speculations, however, he was subjected to endless worry and grievous disappointment. The purchase of coal lands in southwestern Virginia which promised a handsome return on the investment[103] bore little fruit other than "a crop of law suits."[104] And in addition to this his financial situation was further jeopardized when the national government finally concluded not to purchase his real estate property in Washington as a site for the Government Printing Office.[105] The result was that Mahone's modest fortune built up early in life by his tireless

100 *Personal Papers.* William DuB. Sheldon, Cambridge, Massachusetts, to N. M. Blake, March 25, 1935.

101 Richmond *Dispatch,* Oct. 9, 1895. In March, 1894, the Walton Act was passed, providing for the introduction of a modified form of the Australian Ballot in Virginia. Official ballots were required and private booths gave an opportunity for secret voting. The voter was given a ballot by the judge and could secure his aid in marking it, if he so desired. He was given only two and a half minutes to prepare his ballot. Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 299. Regarding this Act one of Mahone's Republican friends wrote to him as follows: "With the Walton annex to the present Election law it is absurd for us to make a fight. The special magistrate is a King over all illiterate votes—with no one to call him to account or make him afraid." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Richard A. Wise, Williamsburg, Virginia, to William Mahone, Sept. 5, 1894.

102 Conversations with William L. McGill.

103 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, D. W. Henderson, Dubuque, Iowa, to William Mahone, May 2, 1891.

104 Senator Preston B. Plumb of Kansas was also interested in these coal fields. On March 24, 1891, he wrote with great concern to Mahone regarding "our southwestern Virginia matters." After raising a question regarding the soundness of their investments, he declared, "The fear is growing on me every day that we are merely buying a crop of law suits." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, P. B. Plumb, U. S. Senate, to William Mahone, March 24, 1891. This fear was largely realized as is evidenced by records which are available in the Hustings Court at Petersburg, Virginia.

105 *Washington Post,* Oct. 9, 1895. In September, 1894, R. A. Wise wrote to Mahone, "I also hope we will get the next Congress and you may succeed in your measures

energy and marked ability as a civil engineer and railroad magnate was later very much involved and greatly dissipated.

Mahone's death occurred in Washington on October 8, 1895, a little more than a week after he had suffered a stroke of paralysis.[106] The same night the body was removed to Petersburg and on the following afternoon the funeral service was conducted from St. Paul's Episcopal Church.[107] A large procession followed the "Hero of the Crater" to Blandford Cemetery where the remains were laid to rest in the Mahone mausoleum.[108] This was in accordance with the wish of the General who had once declared, "I want to be buried in Blandford among my old soldiers and at the Judgment Day I'll call up those ragged rebels and we'll charge the Devil."[109] It was fitting that he should be buried there, in the midst of the soldiers with whom he had fought and only a little removed from the city which had been the center of his varied struggles in behalf of the people of Virginia whom he loved so well.

Many years later, in 1927, a beautiful monument to his memory was erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy.[110] It stands on the Crater Battlefield only a short distance from the Crater itself. On it are inscribed the words, "To the memory of William Mahone, Major General, C. S. A., a distinguished Confederate commander, whose valor and strategy at the Battle of the Crater, July 30, 1864, won for himself and his gallant brigade undying fame."

before it." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Richard A. Wise, Williamsburg, Virginia, to William Mahone, Sept. 5, 1894. Unfortunately for Mahone these hopes were never realized.

106 *Washington Post,* Oct. 9, 1895.

107 Mahone was not a church member but occasionally he and his wife attended the Episcopal church. Conversations with Otelia Mahone McGill.

108 Squires, *Land of Decision,* p. 203.

109 Squires, *Through Centuries Three,* p. 524.

110 This monument was erected under the auspices of the Petersburg Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The dedication address was delivered by William Hodges Mann, a former governor of Virginia. *McGill Papers.* "Speech by William Hodges Mann at the Dedication of the Monument to General William Mahone at the Crater, Petersburg, Virginia, July 30, 1927."

CHAPTER X: THE MAN

> "Our views have been misrepresented, our motives assailed, ourselves calumniated. As for myself, I am willing to leave my vindication to time. Sooner or later, but with certainty, it will come. The inexorable logic of events will demonstrate the truth." From an address by General Mahone before the Readjuster Convention at Richmond, February 25, 1879.

IN 1870 when Mahone's reputation as a brilliant Confederate General was fresh in the minds of the people and when his success as a railroad magnate was attracting increasing attention he received a letter from James D. McCabe, Jr., of New York, asking permission to include his biography in his proposed book, *Great Fortunes, and How They Were Made.* In this volume, McCabe pointed out, he desired to include "not only the men who have made great fortunes, but also those whose careers have been of solid use to the country for the lesson they teach and the example they afford." He wished to include Mahone's biography, he added, because his career was "so marked an instance of the rewards which lie open to genius and determination."[1]

Mahone's brief answer to this letter, written from Lynchburg on July 15, read: "I wish I had time to furnish the information desired in your letter of 11th inst[ant] as I would be glad to gratify you, but really I am too much occupied."[2]

In the following year Mahone's response to a similar communication was very much the same. This time he was approached by A. C. Rogers of the Atlantic Publishing Company, New York, who suggested that a sketch of his life be prepared by General J. Watts De Peyster and included in a forthcoming volume, *Representative Men, North and South.*[3] On March 30, 1871, Mahone wrote in response: "I have y[ou]r favor of 28 inst[ant] and have no objection to the sketch you propose, provided no one is injured thereby."[4] When he received a second letter on the subject only a few days later, he replied: "The subject of your letter, strange as you may suppose, is a matter of no concern to me, for

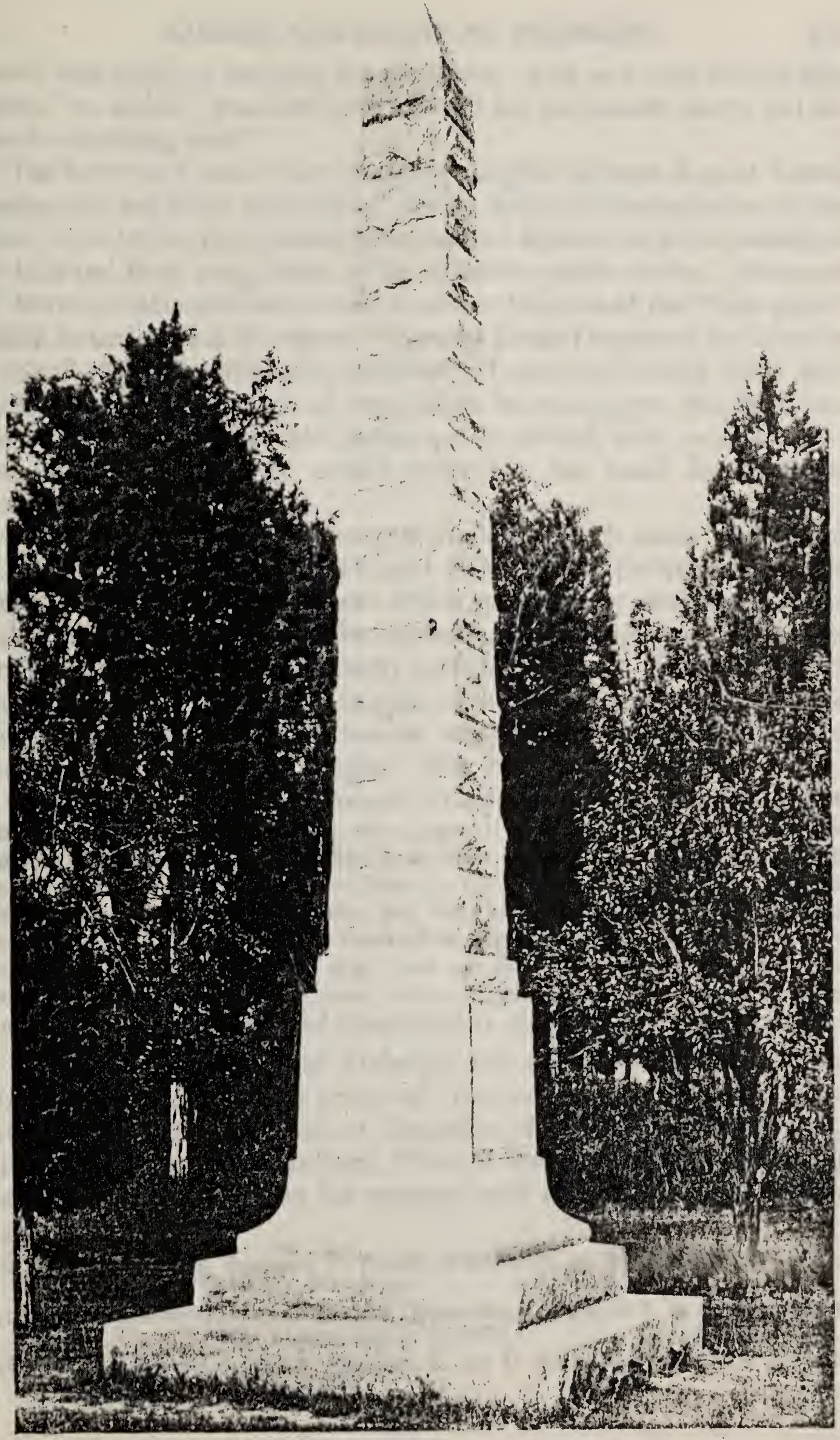
1 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, James D. McCabe, Junior, New York, to William Mahone, July 11, 1870.
2 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Lynchburg, to James D. McCabe, Junior, July 15, 1870.
3 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, A. C. Rogers, New York, to William Mahone, March 28, 1871.
4 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, to A. C. Rogers, March 30, 1871.

really I have no taste to appear in print, if however it is a matter of interest to you & Gen[era]l De Peyster, I will try to find time to revise anything he may write."[5]

During the following decade significant changes took place in the life of Mahone. In 1876, through no fault of his own, his consolidated railroad was placed in the hands of the receivers. In 1877 he announced his candidacy for the gubernatorial nomination, fearlessly advocating the readjustment of the State debt and the promotion of the public school system. By 1879 the Readjusters were denounced as "Repudiators" by the Funders and subjected to every imaginable form of misrepresentation and insult. In the midst of this storm of criticism Mahone challenged the courage of his friends with the declaration, "As for myself, I am willing to leave my vindication to time. Sooner or later, but with certainty, it will come."[6]

In the next few years the criticism directed against Mahone grew increasingly acrimonious. He was denounced for countless reasons, chief among which were his alliance with the Republican party, his effort to break "the Solid South," his control of the negro vote in carrying elections and his overbearing and dictatorial manner as a party leader. By 1888 he was pictured by the hostile press as a veritable "Macbeth," a "Black Douglas of Scotland," "a union of Judas and Catiline," a "human Ogre," a "Devil" and perchance by any other objectionable epithet which occurred to his political opponents.[7] This subject was called to his attention by Alexander Hunter of Washington, who told Mahone that his motives should be vindicated for the sake of posterity and that he owed it to himself, his children and his followers to leave letters and papers which would make possible an authentic interpretation of his life by the future historian. "You have done more for Virginia, and conferred more real prosperity on her than all of her 'Patriot' politicians put together the last quarter of a century," he wrote. "You are teaching— or rather lead[ing] Virginia to learn that *practical* politics lead to substantial prosperity, and not sentimental politics."[8] Hunter made it clear that he did not regard Mahone as perfect, but did recognize him to be "a brilliant soldier, a wise politician, a far sighted statesman, one whose conceptions were profound, and better than all, whose

5 *Ibid.* Letter Books, Idem to Idem, April 8, 1871.
6 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, IX, 31.
7 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Alexander Hunter, Washington, to William Mahone, Dec. 10, 1888.
8 *Ibid.*



The Mahone Monument at the Crater Battlefield

nerve was equal to carrying his plans out. And as a true son of Virginia," he added, "you have ever labored for her benefit above and beyond everything else."[9]

The bitter and sweet were strangely mingled in those days of heated campaigns and fierce animosities. Along with vile denunciations in the press came letters from friends who assured Mahone of their confidence in him and their recognition of his valuable public services. Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts wrote to assure Mahone of the "high place" which he occupied in his regard.[10] General James Longstreet in a letter to a friend made this interesting comment: "I note your remark 'Billy' Mahone 'is a man every inch of him!' Now let me suggest that he is *two* men every inch of him. His *inches* are so limited, that, measured as a man by every *inch only,* would make him too small for manhood status."[11]

Still more significant, however, is the letter which came from Joseph P. Minitree, a warm, personal friend of Mahone. His letter, written in 1891, contains a prophetic note which is only now showing signs of fulfillment. Minitree begins by expressing gratification that the Southern Express Company had recently conferred a favor on Mahone which indicated that the Company, in spite of its early competition with Mahone, recognized him as "an honest, conscientious and stubborn fighter for what he conceives to be right." The letter continues:

> There are others, individuals as well as Corporations, who inwardly appreciate your qualities of head and heart, who know, if they dare to tell the truth, that your best days and greatest abilities have been freely and cheerfully given both in war and in peace to your native State for the advancement of her interests and prosperity as you understood them; but God bless you General, there are thousands of people in Virginia who know all of this and who believe all of this, and yet it is a lamentable fact that they have not the moral courage to openly and boldly say so. The time will come, however, when your great services to your native State and your large and comprehensive ideas will be fully appreciated.[12]

In 1892 a brief sketch of Mahone's life was prepared by S. Bassett French and endorsed by a group of "Eminent and Representative Men of Virginia and the District of Columbia of the Nineteenth Century." It concludes with the statement: "One of the 'best abused' men living, history, if not written by his enemies, will recognize his conspicuous

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Benjamin F. Butler, Washington, to William Mahone, March, 29, 1891.

11 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, James Longstreet, Gainesville, Georgia, to E. A. Angier, Atlanta, Georgia, Oct. 17, 1889. (Letter sent to Mahone.)

12 *Ibid.* Manuscripts, Joseph P. Minitree, R. and D. Railroad Company, Washington, to William Mahone, July 2, 1891.

practical abilities, and the large part he has had in most beneficial measures and reforms in Virginia and in the country at large."[13] The growing appreciation of Mahone has been best illustrated, perhaps, by the recent study of "Major General William Mahone" in W. H. T. Squires' book, *The Land of Decision.*[14] When he began to investigate the life of Mahone, Doctor Squires confesses, he was "intensely prejudiced against him," but the further he went the more convinced he became "that he is today the most outrageously maligned character in V[irgini]a history."[15] And in his brief but illuminating sketch of Mahone he makes the bold assertion that "no one ever loved Virginia more devotedly than he; none ever struggled so long and so successfully in so many different fields of achievement for Virginia, and no Virginian has received less gratitude and less appreciation."[16]

It is only fair to Mahone, therefore, that the opposition to him and the criticism against him should be briefly reviewed and analyzed. Much of the early opposition to Mahone grew out of his efforts to consolidate the railroads of Southside Virginia and to develop the port of Norfolk. Mahone realized, of course, that the success of his plans would prove personally advantageous, but all the time he regarded himself as the champion of Virginia's interests against the encroachments of northern railroad corporations. In these railroad struggles he found himself opposed at various times by John Garrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio, Tom Scott, Vice President of the Pennsylvania, John S. Barbour, President of the Orange and Alexandria, and John W. Daniel, counsel for the Lynchburg stockholders of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. These men, as might be expected, sought to disparage Mahone in every way possible, and his railroad rivalry with Barbour and Daniel led to an even fiercer political rivalry in the succeeding years.

Mahone felt a just pride in the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad and in his various efforts to protect the financial interests of his people. This is evident from his illuminating letter to Stith Bolling, dated March 18, 1872:

> Our Road from Norfolk to Bristol has in the interest of the public done the Express business, and on the 1st of next month, we shall undertake to do the same on the V[irginia] & T[ennessee] Div[isio]n. This doing the Express business by our line has been a sore subject to the Express Co[mpany]. *It is as much a privilege of our franchise as carrying freight by freight trains or pas-*

13 *McGill Papers.* "Sketch of General William Mahone" (1892), p. 13.
14 This study constitutes Chapter XI of Doctor Squires' book.
15 *Manry Papers.* W. H. T. Squires, Norfolk, to L. L. Manry, July 2, 1930.
16 Squires, *Land of Decision,* pp. 200, 201.

sengers by passenger trains, and the receipts from this business forms [sic] *a part of our income, just as our receipts from passengers or other freight.*

I hear that these devils are trying to put a special tax on any Express business done by Railroads, which of course is aimed at our Company, since it is the only line in Virg[*ini*]*a which undertakes to do its own Express business, and we are doing this Express business on our line merely to protect the public against the exorbitant and outrageous charges of the Express Co*[*mpany*]*: We charge about one half as much as they do. Look out then for this effort of theirs to amend tax bill to make any R*[*ail*] *R*[*oad*] *Company doing an Express business pay a specific tax.* And I make the same remarks about Telegraph Co[mpanie]s: we established our office in Norfolk & brought their rates down about one half to the public. The right to operate a telegraph by R[ail] R[oa]d either for its own or public business is also a part of its franchise and cannot be specially taxed.[17]

Another cause of opposition to Mahone was his courageous advocacy of the readjustment of the State debt. This brought him into conflict with Bradley T. Johnson, chief counsel for the bondholders, William L. Royall, attorney for the bondholders, and a host of Funders who were unable, or at least unwilling, to distinguish between readjustment and repudiation. No one criticized Mahone's position more severely than Royall who definitely declared Mahone to be in favor of repudiation. Declaring that the issue in the election of 1879 was repudiation or non-repudiation, Royall asserted: "In that election all the negroes (who constitute the Republican party of the State) voted for legislative candidates who favored repudiation, *while* every 'Rebel Brigadier' in the State, save and except Wm. Mahone, voted to make the State pay her debt."[18] And writing in 1880 Royall reiterated his statement that "every single 'Rebel Brigadier' who now resides in the State of Virginia, except Wm. Mahone, is on the side of the debt payers."[19] Not at all unmindful of the fact that the views of the Readjusters were being

17 *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books. William Mahone, Petersburg, to Stith Bolling, March 18, 1872. As early as 1867 a friend of Mahone wrote to him, "You are the only R[ail] R[oad] man in Virginia who, in my estimation, has pursued a manly honest and independent course in regard to Express Companies, and therefore I desire to cooperate with you, in any plan to cripple that most rascally and shameful monopoly, the 'Adams Express Co.' . . . The Railroads of the South sold themselves to this stupendous monopoly. Not satisfied with this, Adams & Co[mpany] resorted to every dirty trick that Yankee ingenuity and dishonesty could suggest to injure the business of honorable men, endeavoring to make an honest living." *Ibid.* Manuscripts. Briscoe G. Baldwin to William Mahone, March 1867(?). The effect of this opposition was apparent the following year when Walker wrote to Mahone, "I have learned some important facts—Shoemaker, of Adams Express Co. of Baltimore, and other parties are moving Heaven and earth, through Bradley T. Johnson, their attorney here, to put the Virginia & Tenn[essee] Railroad into Bankruptcy." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, R. F. Walker, Richmond, to William Mahone, Nov. 17, 1868.

18 William Lawrence Royall, *A Reply to "A Fool's Errand, by one of the Fools."* New York, 1880, p. 46.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

misrepresented and their motives assailed, Mahone calmly asserted, "As for myself, I am willing to leave my vindication to time."[20]

Closely associated with this criticism was the charge that Mahone used the readjustment of the State debt for personal and political advantage. Doubtless he did, just as every political leader identifies his fortune with the policies which he advocates. The significant fact, however, is that Mahone took an unequivocal stand for readjustment when the other political leaders in the State were halting between two opinions. It was only after his defeat for the gubernatorial nomination in 1877 by the Conservative party that he favored independent action on the part of the Readjusters. It is evident, therefore, that Mahone interested himself in the organization of the Readjuster party not because of a desire to avenge his defeat by the Conservatives but rather because he believed that such an organization was necessary to carry out the will of the people regarding the State debt.

Many who could understand and appreciate Mahone's motives in becoming a Readjuster in 1877 were absolutely unwilling to reconcile themselves to his alliance with the Republicans when he went to the United States Senate in March, 1881. They declared that he had betrayed the Democratic party and was a traitor to his people. Obviously they failed to appreciate the fact that in 1879 Mahone was elected to the Senate by the Readjusters of Virginia in opposition to the Funder candidate, Robert E. Withers. In 1880, too, Mahone and his followers had been virtually expelled from the Democratic party when the national leaders of that party recognized the Funder-Hancock, rather than the Readjuster-Hancock electoral ticket in Virginia. A careful and unbiased analysis of the situation in 1881, therefore, clearly indicates that the course of action adopted by Mahone was not illogical but very human.

From 1877 to 1881 Mahone had become increasingly conscious of the reactionary tendencies in Virginia and he and his followers were probably more interested in the overthrow of Bourbonism than in any other single objective. The defeat of the Funders and the readjustment of the State debt constituted only a small portion of their program. They were interested in the promotion of public schools and the enactment of social and humanitarian legislation. As early as 1870 Mahone had written to a friend: "I concur with you in the wisdom of sending to Congress such men as can accomplish practical good. We want representatives of the progressive spirit—the day has past for political theorists—if you would

20 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, IX, 31.

make Vi[r]g[ini]a great & her people prosperous."[21] In 1881 Mahone still favored this type of representation, and he honestly believed that he could best serve Virginia by being a progressive and practical Senator.

Such was not the opinion, however, of the reactionary, or Bourbon, elements in the South. This was clearly revealed in a letter of William M. Browne of Athens, Georgia, to Jefferson Davis, in which he pointed an accusing finger at Mahone and others who would "bow the knee to expediency ignoring or forgetting principle." His letter continues:

> It disgusts me almost daily to see the spread of this apostacy, among men too, who ought to be the most steadfast. "We must not offend our friends at the North." "The war is over." "The sooner we forget it the better." "We need their money." "It is bad policy to justify what we did." I hear this often and because I always advocate the "bad policy" am looked on as an impracticable "Bourbon."[22]

A. W. Cowper, another Georgian, writing to Davis in 1881, asserted: "The South, however is today as much a people and a nation to itself as tho' separated from the Northern states by the Cordon of five."[23] To Mahone this was a lamentable fact, and he would gladly have seen the reactionary and hostile spirit in the South yield to a more progressive and coöperative one. This explains his interest in the overthrow of Bourbonism and his desire to see a break in "the Solid South." At the same time it gives one the viewpoint of his opponents and helps one to understand the spirit which prompted a distant critic, soon after Mahone's defeat following the Danville Riot, to write: "Virginia is rescued from the Domination of the Traitor and Scoundrel Mahone, and the Negroes; and I am happy and content."[24]

Mahone's attitude toward the negro has been the subject of grave misunderstanding and bitter criticism. At the very outset it should be clearly understood that he never once entertained the thought of "social equality" between the races, nor did he lead the negro to believe that such was the case. The Democratic leaders, however, frequently sought to give this impression to the ignorant and unthinking whites of the State.[25] Another point which should be stressed is that the Republican-

21 *Ibid.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Lynchburg, to J. W. Llewellyn, Sept. 6, 1870.

22 William M. Browne, Athens, Georgia, to Jefferson Davis, June 26, 1882. Rowland, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist,* IX, 174.

23 A. W. Cowper, Darien, Georgia, to Jefferson Davis, June 23, 1881. Rowland, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist,* VIII, 605.

24 E. G. W. Butler, St. Louis, Missouri, to Jefferson Davis, Nov. 12, 1883. Rowland, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist,* IX, 268.

25 *Personal Papers.* George F. Bragg, Junior, "The Hero of Jerusalem, in honor of

ism of Mahone and Wise "no more contemplated negro-domination than the so-called Democracy of the Bourbons."[26] Mahone had no fear whatsoever that a minority race with its social and economic disadvantages could ever endanger white supremacy in Virginia, and he certainly never intended that such a thing should be the case.

In 1831 Mahone's father, Fielding J. Mahone, assisted in the overthrow of the Nat Turner Insurrection when all the county was terrorized and the refugees at Jerusalem were greatly endangered. In 1864 Mahone commanded the three brigades at the Battle of the Crater which frustrated the assault of Ferrero's negro troops whose frenzied advance threatened the inhabitants of Petersburg and the very cause of the Confederacy. For several years following the war Mahone sought to curb the vote of the negro because he believed that by so doing he was aiding the Conservative cause and promoting the best interests of Virginia. His attitude toward negro suffrage changed, however, as the conservative forces in the State became increasingly reactionary. Then, but not until then, did he appeal to the blacks as well as the whites to break the power of Bourbonism, and to take steps toward the settlement of the State debt, the promotion of the public schools and the encouragement of the charitable and humanitarian institutions of Virginia.

When the most important objectives of the Readjusters had been realized Mahone and a majority of his followers aligned themselves with the Republican party, while most of the Funders and some of the Readjusters returned to the Democratic fold. In the hectic political struggles which ensued both the Republicans and the Democrats sought to control the negro vote. The Republicans, as a rule, were much more successful, and this only served to increase the vexation and ill-will of the Democrats who hastened to make of Mahone "a veritable protagonist of political darkness and of imaginary negro domination."[27] In this way Mahone, in the minds of the prejudiced and uninformed, came to be "a legendary figure of threatening evil,"[28] and with the passing of years many Virginians have accepted the legend for fact. This characterization of Mahone and the drawing of the "color line" proved extremely valuable to the Democrats not only in the election following the Danville Riot but also in the subsequent political campaigns. The

the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of General William Mahone of Virginia," Baltimore, 1926, p. 8. *Ibid.* George F. Bragg, Junior, Baltimore, Maryland, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 25, 1930.

26 *Ibid.* Jennings C. Wise, Washington, to N. M. Blake, July 17, 1930.

27 *Ibid.* William DuB. Sheldon, Cambridge, Massachusetts, to N. M. Blake, March 25, 1935.

28 *Ibid.*

result was that Mahone, while he continued to dominate the negro vote,[29] gradually lost many of his white followers.

Mahone interested himself in the negro vote because he needed the coöperation of both the blacks and the liberal whites to enact the legislative measures and secure the reforms which he believed would most contribute to the welfare of Virginia. Sometimes the negro vote was purchased, and frequently the individual poll tax was paid from the general campaign fund. Negroes were used as canvassers in certain sections of the State, and many of them were liberally repaid for their assistance. In some instances they were rewarded with minor offices but seldom were given positions of any great importance or influence. The interests of the negro were cared for, however, by several legislative enactments. Among these were the abolition of the poll tax and the promotion of the public schools, and more specifically, by the construction of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and the erection of an asylum for the negro insane at Petersburg.[30]

John Jasper, a negro preacher of Richmond, famous for his sermon on "The Sun Do Move," is credited with an amusing story which was told to illustrate Mahone's relations with the negro. Jasper told his congregation that he had recently dreamt of his death and his long and laborious ascent to the Pearly Gates of Heaven. After giving his name in response to the question of the gatekeeper he was asked if he was riding or walking. When he replied that he was walking he was told that he could not enter. Very much discouraged and disheartened he was making the difficult descent when he suddenly saw General Mahone approaching on the stairway. Learning that Mahone was on the way to Heaven, Jasper told him that he would never be allowed to enter since

29 Mahone's control of the negro vote remained practically unchallenged until 1888. In that year John M. Langston, a mulatto who had become President of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute at Petersburg, led a successful colored revolt against Mahone in southeastern Virginia. Many of the negroes remained loyal to Mahone, however, and supported him when he ran for the governorship in 1889.

30 Cooper, *American Politics (non-partisan) from the begining to date*, I, 264. Pearson, *Readjuster Movement in Virginia*, pp. 151, 154-156. *Personal Papers*. Bragg, "The Hero of Jerusalem," pp. 5, 6, 13, 14, 28. McIlwaine's statement in this connection is of interest. Speaking of Mahone he says, "He used the negroes for his own purposes and repaid them with the normal school and the insane asylum. This was all right, but the Democratic Party would have given them this recognition sooner or later. I don't believe, either, that General Mahone promised them any social recognition. His dealings with them, however, were distinctly bad for the State." *Personal Papers*. H. R. McIlwaine, Richmond, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Jan. 4, 1933. Along with this statement should be considered the comment of Gandy who feels that Mahone entertained toward the negro the practical viewpoint of "bargain and sale." Conversations with J. M. Gandy, President of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, Petersburg, Virginia.

he was on foot. After thinking over the matter for a moment Mahone told Jasper of a plan by which they both might get in. He suggested to Jasper that he get down on all fours and let him ride up to the gate. In this way, Mahone told Jasper, he would be able to say he was riding, and when the gate was opened he would ride in on Jasper's back, and they would both be there. This sounded like a reasonable proposition to Jasper and he determined to comply with the suggestion in spite of his great fatigue and the strenuous journey which lay ahead of him. When finally the trip had been completed the General knocked on the gate. "Who's dar?" came the voice from within. "Gen'l Mahone from Virginny, a humble sarvant of de Lawd," was the reply. "Am you ridin' or is you walkin'?" came the query. "Ridin'," answered the General. "Wal," said the voice, "git down an' tie yo' hoss an' cum in." So Mahone entered, and Jasper was left stranded on the outside. And this, said Jasper to his audience, was an illustration of what would always be the case. The negro would always be used by the white man for his own advantage and not for the welfare of the negro. Accordingly, Jasper urged the negroes to take no part in politics whatsoever.[31]

Some Virginians unquestionably felt an innate antagonism to Mahone because he was not "to the manor born." To them he was *novus homo* and one who lacked the prestige of a celebrated and distinguished ancestry. His opponents dubbed him a "Railroad Ishmael"[32] and treated him accordingly. This, no doubt, was the principal reason why in the nominating convention of 1877 he found his rivals united on "anybody to beat Mahone." It must have been partly responsible, too, for the continued hostility against him by such military leaders as Jubal A. Early and David A. Weisiger, such financial representatives as Bradley T. Johnson and William L. Royall and such political opponents as John

31 This story is recounted in a letter from Henry A. Wise who adds this comment, "I am certain that the story is authentic, and that it originated in Richmond and was first told about General Mahone." *Personal Papers.* Henry A. Wise, Kiptopeke, Northampton County, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, March 3, 1934. Mahone, like Bismarck, believed in "Horse and Rider Alliances" and was equally careful, no doubt, to see that he was the rider and not the horse. It would be absolutely unfair and incorrect, however, to conclude that Mahone was indifferent to the interests and welfare of the negro. This is denied by a negro critic of Mahone who asserts that "not since the days of Thomas Jefferson has there articulated in Virginia a more devoted defender and protector of the rights of black men, than William Mahone." *Ibid.* Bragg, "The Hero of Jerusalem," p. 3. Mahone's struggle for "a free ballot, a full vote and a fair count," his overthrow of the capitation tax, his abolition of the whipping-post, his interest in the promotion of the public schools and the establishment of eleemosynary institutions, and his desire to see the negro given an opportunity to become self-supporting—all these things reveal Mahone's concern to solve the race problem justly and equitably.

32 *Dictionary of American Biography,* XII, 212.

W. Daniel and John S. Barbour. On this point, however, Mahone was neither sensitive nor apologetic and in his last great campaign he was presented to the voters as "a man of the people" and one who could best be understood "by the people themselves."[33] His friends frequently stressed the point that while Mahone's opponents were content to bask in the glory of a once famous name, Mahone, on the other hand, was actively engaged in the creation of an illustrious name.

A charge frequently brought against Mahone is that he built up a strong political machine in order to rule Virginia at will.[34] That he built up a powerful organization no one can deny, but it is rash to speak with equal dogmatism regarding the purposes and motives which actuated him. Those who decry the trend of several legislative measures which he is said to have sponsored, particularly the "Commissioner of Sales" bill and the Railroad bill, generally neglect to credit him with the commendable legislation which was actually passed by the Readjuster Legislature. In 1883 the Democrats determined to overthrow "Mahoneism" by the development of a rival political machine and, aided by the timely occurrence of the Danville Riot, were successful in the campaign of that year. Then it was, according to Jennings C. Wise, that "reactionary bossism succeeded to the constructive bossism of Mahone."[35] It was not surprising, therefore, that in the following years it became increasingly evident that "the system of fraud that had been built up to defeat Mahoneism by disfranchising the negroes had a demoralizing effect upon the whole electoral system."[36] This was one of the chief reasons for the calling of a Constitutional Convention and the inclusion of suffrage provisions in the Constitution of 1902 which practically disfranchised the negro.[37]

In concluding the criticisms against Mahone, mention should be made of his abrupt and dictatorial manner. There can be no question but that he displayed many of the characteristics of an autocrat. His experiences as a self-reliant youth, a successful civil engineer, a brilliant general and an influential railroad president had developed his organ-

33 Virginia State Library. *Virginia Political Pamphlets,* Vol. 4, "Mahone and Virginia! An open letter to Hon. John Paul, from Col. W. C. Elam," pp. 3-5.

34 No doubt it has occurred to the reader that only two Virginians have had their names definitely associated with a political party or faction—Jefferson, the father of Jeffersonian Republicanism, and Mahone, the protagonist of "Mahoneism." This fact is partly responsible for Judge Edmund Waddill's statement that Mahone was "the most influential political figure which Virginia has produced since the days of Thomas Jefferson."

35 *Personal Papers.* Jennings C. Wise, Washington, to N. M. Blake, July 17, 1930.

36 Morton, *History of Virginia,* III, 301, 302.

37 Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions,* VII, 3906-3908.

izing and administrative ability to a marked degree but given him none of the tact and suavity so essential to a political leader. At the very beginning of Mahone's political career Fulkerson declared him to be "more or less impulsive,"[38] and a few years later denounced him as "a tyrant and presumptuous dictator."[39] This view was concurred in by others who observed that in conducting a committee meeting, in running a convention and in carrying out a political campaign Mahone commanded rather than advised.[40]

To account for Mahone's dictatorial manner one must remember that he possessed unbounded confidence in himself and in the justice of the measures for which he fought. Like Louis XIV he identified himself with the State, and he declared with all the confidence of the elder Pitt, that he could save that State.[41] Accordingly, he was slow to accept advice from his friends and absolutely unwilling to compromise with his enemies.[42] John S. Wise was thinking of this when he asserted: "The only way Mahone will bury the hatchet is in the heads of every one who opposes him."[43]

38 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, Abram Fulkerson, Goodson, Virginia, to William Mahone, May 18, 1868.

39 *Personal Papers.* Taken from "The Cause We Lost and the Land We Love," by Dr. Mason Graham Ellzey.

40 Mahone's committee meetings were always carefully planned and his lieutenants properly instructed. It was not the time to discuss procedure, according to Mahone, but the time to issue orders. When a committeeman spoke out of turn on a certain occasion Mahone impatiently demanded, "Who in hell asked you for your opinion anyway?" When the man, very much wounded by the rebuff, started to leave the room Mahone somewhat calmed him by saying, "Don't be a fool; sit down, and your chance will come." Conversations with Edmund Waddill, Junior. Lucius L. Manry, a nephew of General Mahone and one of his political allies in Southampton County, tells a somewhat similar story. He attended a Republican Committee Meeting in Petersburg which lasted considerably longer than was generally the case. Some of the members, seeing that they had missed their train, were loitering about the room and discussing the approaching campaign. Suddenly Mahone cried out, "How in hell do you expect to get anything done if you stand around here all day?" Seldom indeed, did anyone dare to clash with the General, but on this occasion Manry ventured to retort, "How in hell do you expect us to get back to work when you keep us so long that we miss our train?" Conversations with Lucius L. Manry.

41 Mahone believed that one of the greatest services he could render to Virginia would be to free it from Bourbonism. Accordingly, he and his followers applied the State motto of Virginia, "Sic Semper Tyrannis," directly to their opponents, and sought in every possible way to break their power.

42 *Personal Papers.* Robert M. Hughes, Natural Bridge, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Sept. 5, 1930. Henry A. Wise makes this comment regarding Mahone, "Like most strong men he ruled with a rod of iron and tolerated very little interference. He expected absolute obedience from his lieutenants and was impatient of suggestions from them. The result was that in time many of his best men broke with him." *Ibid.* Henry A. Wise, Kiptopeke, Northampton County, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, May 15, 1934.

43 *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XXXVII, 33.

A detailed account of Mahone and his friendships would provide a strangely fascinating and tragic narrative. In his various endeavors he was able to win the confidence and support of many individuals, but he lived to see a number of his most trusted friends desert and denounce him. Without question he was more responsible than any other person for the elevation of Walker, Kemper and Holliday to the governorship of the State, but he afterwards became estranged from each one. Goode assisted him in his railroad consolidation schemes but later was numbered among his most violent political enemies. Staples was given a judgeship and offered other honors only to abandon the one who had so frequently favored him.[44] In the case of Massey the circumstances were different but the outcome very much the same. The "Parson" was happy to welcome Mahone to the ranks of the Readjusters and for a time the two men were on the best of terms. Massey was too much of a leader, however, to content himself with a subordinate position and he soon became restive under Mahone's intolerable "tyranny." When he finally became convinced that he could expect no political favors from him he broke from the General and led "the Big Four" in their opposition to him.

Some of Mahone's closest friends were several years younger than himself. He made it a point to surround himself with young men of talent and ability who could serve as his lieutenants in his political campaigns. Both parties seemed to profit by the union; Mahone gave strength and prestige to these young political aspirants and at the same time was aided in his campaigns by their editorial and oratorical skill. In return for the favors which he conferred upon them Mahone expected absolute loyalty and unquestioning coöperation. However, as their careers expanded and their strength and influence increased it was only natural that they should hesitate to follow Mahone with the same devotion and obedience that had characterized their early relationships. This was illustrated all too clearly in the case of Riddleberger, Cameron and Wise.

Riddleberger possessed marked ability as an editor and orator. Mahone appreciated his talents and enjoyed his friendship, affectionately referring to him as "Riddle." They coöperated wholeheartedly in the Readjuster campaigns, and the Riddleberger Debt Settlement was really the product of their combined efforts. Mahone selected Riddleberger for his colleague in the United States Senate and was largely responsible for his election to that position by the Virginia Legislature in 1881.

44 Library of Congress. *Campaign of 1887.* Pamphlets, "New Virginia," pp. 22, 23, 30-33, 35.

However, when Mahone was unable to succeed himself as Senator in 1885 he sought to follow Riddleberger in 1887. This action, perhaps, only served to widen the breach between the two men and prepared the way for the open break in 1888.

Cameron, like Riddleberger, was a brilliant man, an excellent writer and a forceful speaker. To Mahone more than any other person he was indebted for his election as Mayor of Petersburg and later as Governor of Virginia. Properly appreciating the favors which had been conferred upon him Cameron was disposed to number Mahone among the greatest men that Virginia had produced. On one occasion, indeed, he is reported to have declared enthusiastically: "I wouldn't give the parings of Mahone's toenails for all these men." Small wonder, then, that it was afterwards said of Cameron's administration that, "he immortalized and canonized the toenails of Mahone."[45] Even before the end of his term of office, however, a misunderstanding arose between the two men largely because Cameron felt that Mahone was meddling in his affairs.[46] The estrangement increased and by 1888 Cameron was numbered among Mahone's active opponents.

To none of his friends was Mahone more devoted than to John S. Wise. His residence at Petersburg was a second home to "Johnnie" whom he loved with a father's affection. Wise was no less devoted to the General and his letters to Mahone clearly reveal his admiration and high regard for him. Because of his marked ability and unusual energy Wise was one of Mahone's most valuable political lieutenants. His victory over Parson Massey for Congressman-at-large in 1882 definitely indicated his hold upon the people of the State for Massey, too, was extremely popular. It was only natural, therefore, that the Republicans should nominate him for the governorship in 1885 and his campaign against Fitzhugh Lee is memorable for its good spirit and close rivalry. Late in 1886 when other friends of Mahone were showing signs of estrangement Wise wrote him a cordial letter in which he professed undying loyalty.[47] In less than two years, however, he was leading a revolt against Mahone, asserting that the General was injuring both the party and himself by his exacting demands on his followers, and calling upon all true Republicans to no longer indulge him "through a false friendship."[48] Mahone was deeply wounded by this action on the

45 Conversations with Robert Cabaniss, Petersburg, Virginia.
46 Conversations with F. K. Clements, Petersburg, Virginia.
47 *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, Richmond, to William Mahone, Dec. 5, 1886.
48 *Ibid.* Scrap Books, XXXVI, 42.

part of Wise and the subsequent breach in their friendship was never healed although Wise afterwards expressed a desire for reconciliation and acknowledged his great indebtedness to the General.[49]

It should not be concluded, however, that all of Mahone's friends neglected and deserted him. Many of them continued to admire him because of his strength and to love him in spite of any evidences of weakness. Among these were S. Bassett French, a warm personal friend and a wise political adviser. Another was R. F. Walker, affectionately called "Dick," who was of considerable value to him as a confidential political aid. Others might be mentioned, including John Paul of Harrisonburg, Richard A. Wise of Williamsburg, and Edmund Waddill, Junior, of Richmond. When Mahone died in 1895 it is doubtful if he and his family had a more devoted friend than Judge Waddill. General Mahone was extremely devoted to all of his friends and yet he frequently spoke to them or about them in a reckless and profane manner. On a certain occasion when one of his friends remonstrated against this practice, Mahone is said to have retorted: "Well, who in hell can I cuss out if not my friends?"[50]

The Mahone residence in Petersburg was constructed in 1874.[51] It was "the embodiment of luxurious good taste" both on the exterior and the interior.[52] In its spacious rooms were found many objects of art, several of which were collected by Mrs. Mahone and her daughter during their visits to Europe.[53] Among the numerous paintings none at-

49 In 1894 Wise wrote to C. C. Clarke, "You say to Mahone for me that if there is any way in which I can be of service to him in this matter I will gladly do all in my power to serve him—There never has been a time when I would not— I never forgot how he helped me in the hour of need, & when I have heard that his affairs were not as prosperous as formerly it has distressed me as much as if we had never had a misunderstanding. Now, or hereafter, if he feels that my services can aid him in any way God knows I will be glad of the opportunity to show him that I never have for one instant forgotten how much I am indebted to him." *Ibid.* Manuscripts, John S. Wise, New York, to C. C. Clarke, April 26, 1894. (Letter sent to Mahone.)

50 Conversations with Lucius L. Manry.

51 The home is now occupied (1935) by William L. McGill who married Otelia Mahone, the General's daughter. This residence is designated as one of the "noted homes" of Petersburg and an historical marker on the corner of Washington and Market streets, reads, "Half a block south is the home of Major General William Mahone, famed for his gallant conduct at the Battle of the Crater, July 30, 1864." *Personal Papers.* "Key to Inscriptions on Virginia Highway Historical Markers," Third Edition, Richmond, Virginia, 1932, p. 100.

52 *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, p. 50.

53 The newspapers reported Mahone as one of the eleven millionaires of the United States Senate, estimating his wealth at two million dollars. *Mahone Collection.* Scrap Books, XX, 33. According to members of the family, however, this was by far too generous an estimate. Most of Mahone's fortune was accumulated through his

tracted greater attention than Elder's work, "The Battle of the Crater," for which the artist received five thousand dollars.[54] At the rear of the house was a beautiful rose garden in which could be found every known species of that flower.[55]

Mahone's "work shop" was in the basement of his home. Here he wrote letters, prepared addresses and pamphlets, planned political campaigns and directed the work of his assistants.[56] In the office was an extensive library of documentary material, a complete collection of letters which were received, and copies of all letters which in turn were sent out by Mahone and his assistants.[57] In all his work Mahone revealed a comprehensive viewpoint as well as a complete mastery of details. It was not unusual for him to spend the entire evening in the office, often remaining on the job until three or four in the morning.[58] As a rule, therefore, he was a late riser. "I'm like an old horse," he used to tell his friends, "hard to get down and hard to get up."[59]

The first year that Mahone served in the United States Senate he and his family resided at the Arlington Hotel. The following year they were at the Portland Flats, but during the remaining years of his term were back again at the Arlington.[60] When Mahone was not at Washington he spent most of his time at Richmond or Petersburg. For several years his political headquarters were at the "Whig" office in Richmond, although many of his later campaigns were conducted from his residence at Petersburg.

When Mahone cast his lot with the Republican party in the Senate and especially after he became the leader of the Republican party in Virginia he and his family were socially ostracized to a marked degree.[61]

railroad activities. His investments promised great returns, but failed to materialize as he had anticipated. Conversations with Otelia Mahone McGill.

54 Conversations with Carter R. Bishop. At the time of the settlement of the Mahone estate the picture was sold to the Westmoreland Club, at Richmond, Virginia, where it may be seen today.

55 *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, p. 50.

56 Mahone wrote hundreds of personal and business letters, generally brief and to the point. His campaign letters were written at greater length and the arguments were clearly and forcefully presented. Mahone's handwriting was bold and positive but not always legible. One of his friends complained, "Don't you understand modern English chirography? I don't understand Egyptian Hieroglyphics in which you seem to prefer to communicate to your friends." *Mahone Collection.* Manuscripts, W. W. Wing, Richmond, to William Mahone, Nov. 2, 1868.

57 These papers constitute the *Mahone Collection* and form the basis of this study.

58 *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, p. 50.

59 Conversations with Lucius L. Manry.

60 Conversations with Otelia Mahone McGill.

61 Mahone and his followers were vilified as "Black Republicans," a social stigma of the worst possible sort.

In order to find more congenial associations Mrs. Mahone and Otelia made several visits to England and the continent where the daughter enjoyed the advantages of excellent musical training.[62] During these periods Mahone was completely occupied with his political activities at Washington or in Virginia, and entirely disregarded the scorn and animosity of his enemies.[63] When he was asked if he had been ostracized by the people of Virginia he is reported to have exclaimed, with characteristic force, "Ostracized me! Not much. I ostracized them."[64]

When Mahone registered at a hotel he generally identified himself simply as "Mahone, Virginia." Wherever he went his striking appearance and unusual dress made him a figure of marked interest. He was hardly more than five feet five inches in height and his weight was something less than a hundred pounds. His feet were unusually small and narrow requiring a number nine quadruple A shoe. Mahone has left a brief description of himself which is of particular interest. Writing to the artist, Richard N. Brooke, in 1871, he called attention to these points: "Grey eye—deep set—heavy brow—light hair—beard dark underneath & heavy in front view."[65] Those who knew Mahone intimately declared that he possessed a brilliant eye which appeared almost black when he was engaged in earnest conversation. His dress was as interesting and picturesque as his physical appearance. He wore loose, baggy trousers which were plaited at the waist. As a rule his vest was only partially buttoned allowing full expanse to his plaited shirt bosom. His coat was long and full, of the Prince Albert type, and his hat was invariably wide-brimmed and high crowned.[66] Mahone had a reputation as a most fastidious dresser and the northern tailor who served him is reported to have exclaimed: "I would rather make dresses for eight women than a suit for the General. He is so hard to please."[67]

62 *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, p. 50.

63 J. T. Gittman recounts an interesting anecdote in this connection. Butler Mahone, so the story goes, was out very late one night and arose too tardily the following morning to join the family at breakfast. Very much concerned about his father's possible reaction in the matter he finally determined to face him in the study. "This is a bad day, father," he said by way of introduction; "I don't know when I've seen more rain. I'm sorry you won't be able to get out." "Oh that's all right, son," the General answered; "I'll just sit here quietly in the Library all day and see if I can't think of some way to worry the damn Democrats to death." *Personal Papers.* J. T. Gittman, Columbia, South Carolina, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 21, 1934.

64 *McGill Papers.* Scrap Book, p. 50.

65 *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone, Lynchburg, to Richard N. Brooke, March 28, 1871. A splendid portrait of Mahone, painted by Brooke, may be found in the Mahone residence at Petersburg.

66 *Personal Papers.* John Bassett Moore, New York, to N. M. Blake, Jan. 16, 1934.

67 Conversations with Otelia Mahone McGill.

Mahone was deeply devoted to his wife and children.[68] When his wife would chide him, as she frequently did, and declare that he was more concerned about the welfare of Virginia than that of his family he would answer: "No, my family first, but Virginia next."[69] Mrs. Mahone was a woman of striking beauty and broad culture. She was the idol of the soldiers who fought under General Mahone, and the honors which they conferred upon her were repaid by the warm welcome which she extended to them at all times and under all circumstances.[70] Mrs. Mahone enjoyed the acquaintance of many of the most prominent public men of the country. So impressed were they by her charm and ability that they were convinced that the only thing which kept her out of the White House was the fact that she wasn't a man![71] A story is told which shows her to have been a woman of strong and determined mind. One day when the Readjuster Movement was at its height Parson Massey was being entertained at the Mahone residence. When they were seated at the table Mahone said to his wife: "Well, 'Puss,' I guess you're going to ask the 'Parson' to say grace, aren't you?" "I certainly am not," she answered. "No parson who has turned politician can say grace at my table."[72]

Mahone was an affectionate and perhaps over-indulgent parent.[73] The loss of several of his children in their infancy might easily account for this failing, if such, indeed, was the case. Writing to a friend in 1871, he said,

> In this respect my losses have been grievous & great in number—three out of nine—two boys and one girl, are all that I have now; and somewhat singular to

68 *Personal Papers.* Greenlee D. Letcher, Lexington, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 1, 1934.

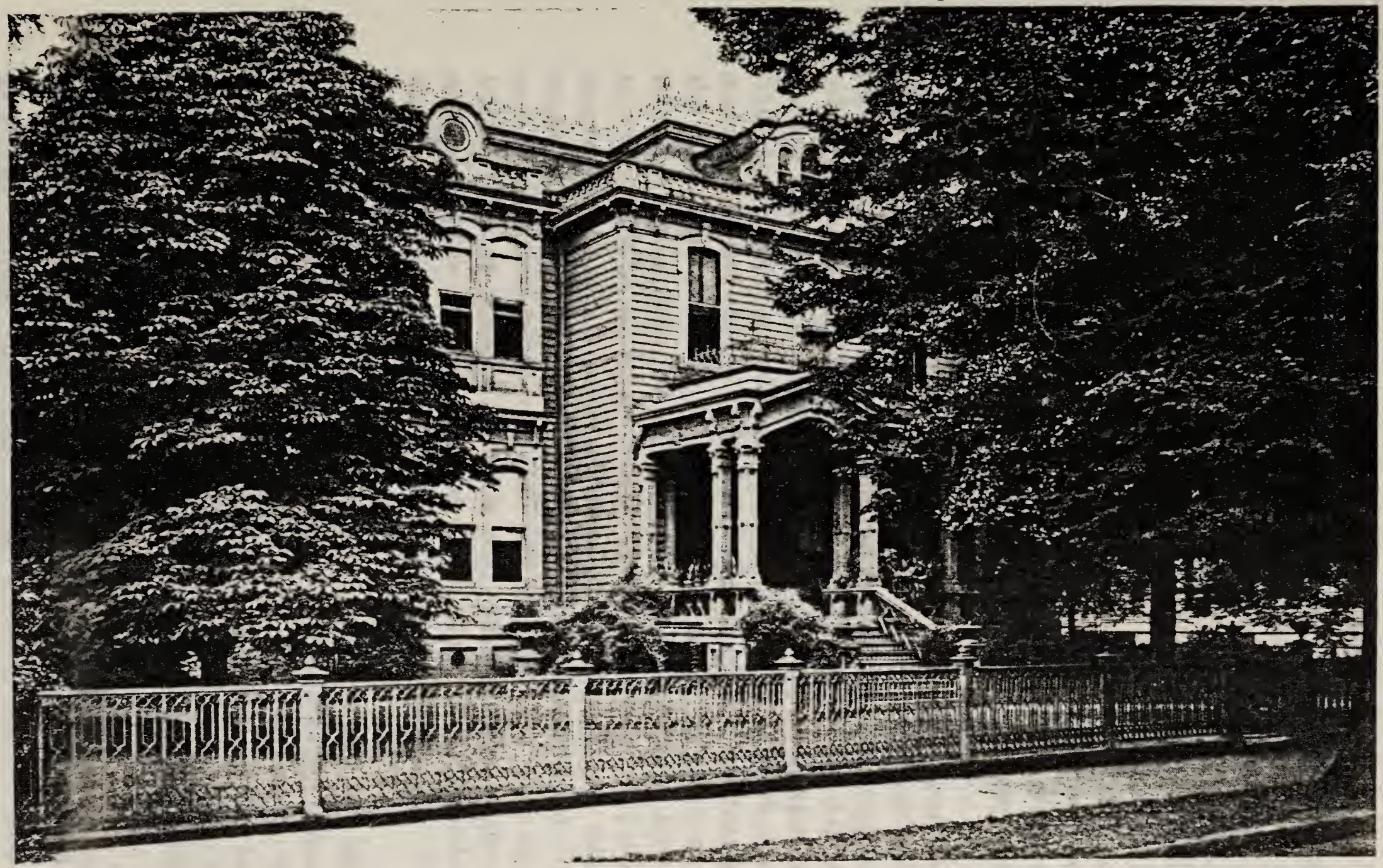
69 Conversations with Otelia Mahone McGill.

70 An oft-told story illustrates the high regard which Mahone's soldiers had for Mrs. Mahone. One day, after returning from Richmond by train, she boarded one of the little mule cars of that period and started home. When she reached the corner of Washington and Long Market streets, about a square from her home, there was a downpour of rain. The driver turned the car from the tracks down Long Market Street to the Mahone residence, carried an umbrella over Mrs. Mahone to her door, returned to Washington Street and resumed his usual trip to the West End Park. A few days later when the driver was called to account for his unusual action he admitted that he had turned the car from its usual course "because it was raining and Mrs. Mahone was aboard." "But, sir," the Superintendent remonstrated, "you know that you are not to deliver passengers to their homes at any time." "I understand that, sir, as well as you," the driver responded, "but I'll always take Mrs. Mahone home when it's raining." *Personal Papers.* J. T. Gittman, Columbia, South Carolina, to N. M. Blake, Feb. 21, 1934.

71 Conversations with William L. McGill.

72 Conversations with Otelia Mahone McGill.

73 *Personal Papers.* Henry A. Wise, Kiptopeke, Northampton County, Virginia, to N. M. Blake, May 15, 1934. Along with this should be mentioned Mahone's gen-



The Mahone Home at Petersburg

say Mast[er] Willie the elder is now at school at Hanover Academy, Coleman's old place. Mast[er] Butler, who bears the name of his grandfather is with us—yet not sufficiently matured to send away. The girl is but a baby.[74]

The three children here mentioned were the only ones to reach maturity although thirteen children were born in the family. William engaged in the tobacco trade for a time and later served as collector of customs at Petersburg. Butler was associated with his father as private secretary for a number of years and afterwards was in the government service. Otelia, the daughter, travelled extensively in Europe and in 1895 married William L. McGill, a member of a prominent Petersburg family.

For many years Mahone's chief interest lay in the railroads of Southside Virginia. Soon after the war he regained the presidency of the Norfolk and Petersburg and immediately launched the program of consolidation which resulted in the establishment of the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad. Mahone's training and experience as a civil engineer only served to increase his interest in railroad construction, maintenance and repair. Occasionally he traversed the entire length of the road from Norfolk to Bristol by hand-car in order to make a thorough examination of the roadbed. More frequently, however, the trip was made by passenger coach. One day when he was making the journey by train a head-on collision occurred. Mahone rebuked the engineers for the mishap and concluded with the statement, "You men won't be satisfied, of course, until you can pass each other on a single track." One of Mahone's friends who was with him at the time expressed surprise that the General could remain so calm and treat the matter so philosophically. "Damn it," Mahone responded, "I can't do justice to the occasion."[75]

Mahone's control of the Southside railroads got him into all sorts of novel and amusing situations. On one occasion he found it necessary to dismiss one of his employees at Lynchburg. The man came to Mahone's office to discuss the matter and could be prevailed upon to leave only when Mahone threatened to drive him out. He determined to make the matter a subject for court action, declaring that the General had threat-

erosity. Because of his reputed wealth he was constantly besieged by those who professed their need of assistance. In all such cases it was extremely difficult for him to refuse. The result, therefore, was that he was probably much more liberal than his funds actually warranted. Those who knew him best declared him to be "generous to a fault." Conversations with Mrs. William R. McKenney.

74 *Mahone Collection.* Letter Books, William Mahone to George G. Butler, May 26, 1871.

75 Conversations with Robert Cabaniss.

ened his life. When Mahone was called upon to defend himself his method was brief but convincing. Pushing back his coat sleeve he revealed to the crowd his thin, lean arm. "That's a hell of an arm for a man to be afraid of, isn't it?" he asked, and the case was dismissed amid general laughter.[76]

No recreation made a greater appeal to Mahone than the game of poker. Having learned the sport from his father at the old Jerusalem Tavern he still greatly enjoyed it as a member of the Senatorial Poker Club. In the heyday of his railroad activities he frequently enjoyed the pastime with the cattle raisers from southwestern Virginia who visited Petersburg and considered it an honor to have a game with the General.[77] In later years, particularly when he was residing at the Chamberlain Hotel, he found many opportunities to enjoy the game with the Senators and sportsmen who frequented that popular establishment.

There was enough Irish in Mahone to make the love of a fight one of his chief characteristics. Even as a youth he had written to a friend: "Wherever there is something to be fought for—there I wish to be."[78] And this trait proved to be one of the most significant features of his active and varied career. Defending the cause of the Confederacy in the War Between the States, upholding the interests of Virginia in the struggle for railroad consolidation, and championing the rights of the common people both as a Readjuster and a Republican—in all these endeavors Mahone revealed the qualities of an earnest, determined and persistent fighter.

Closely associated with his love of a fight was his absolute fearlessness. As a soldier he resolutely withstood the Federal forces at the Battle of the Crater, as a railroad magnate he firmly opposed the northern railway financiers, as a Readjuster he defied the bankers of New York and of London, and as a Senator he maintained his independence of Bourbon-Democracy and of caucus rule. It was this record of fearless devotion to Virginia that led Judge Edmund Waddill, Junior, to exclaim:

General Mahone was a man absolutely devoid of fear. He did the right thing as he saw it under all circumstances without regard to consequences. He was the most influential political figure which Virginia has produced since the days of Thomas Jefferson.[79]

76 Conversations with John Mallory, Petersburg, Virginia.

77 Conversations with H. R. McIlwaine, Richmond, Virginia.

78 *V. M. I. Papers.* William Mahone, Culpeper Court House, to Colonel F. H. Smith, Sept. 10, 1850.

79 Conversations with Edmund Waddill, Junior.

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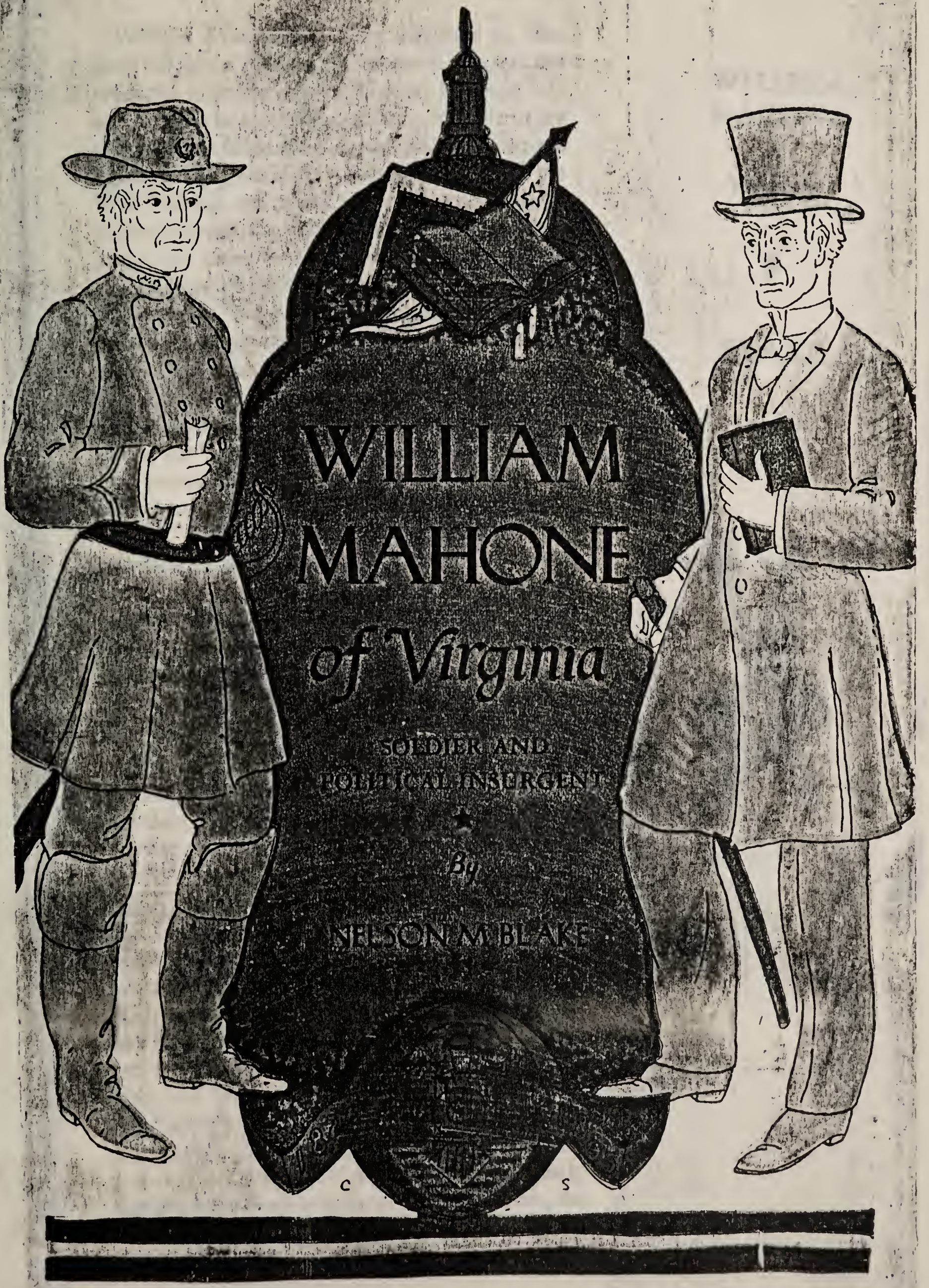
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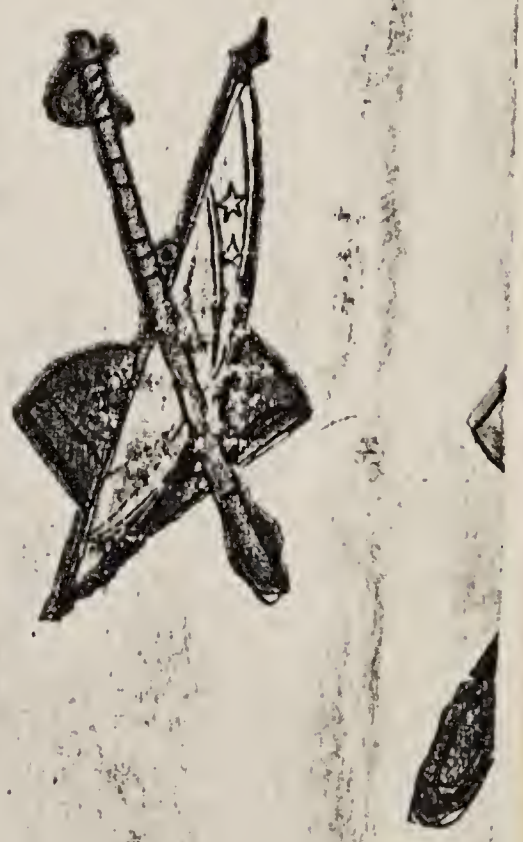

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